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GABRIELLA MICKS

PASSIONATE PILGRIMS

THE AMERICAN PARADOX OF SEEKING A
CULTURAL IDENTITY IN EUROPE, 1802-60

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY GUIDO FINK

TRACCE

CARTE VARIE E VARIABILI
STUDI DI LETTERATURA
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CARTE VARIE & VARIABILI
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COMITATO DI LETTURA
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For Harry Levin

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FOREWORD

Much, as is well known, has been written and said on the complex, ambiguous cultural relations between America and Europe in the nineteenth century and after: it was, however, a most illuminating seminar held by Harry Levin at Harvard in 1969-70 which I was fortunate enough to attend, that first awakened my interest in this subject. With Professor Levin's generous and friendly encouragement and advice, I have since explored myself the impact - often traumatic, sometimes antagonistic, never irrelevant - of the European experience on the American consciousness in two essays, which appeared separately and yet are connected, on Washington Allston and his Italian experience and on Hawthorne and *The Marble Faun* respectively (1).

Following Harry Levin's and other friends' advice, these essays are now reprinted in book form with some minor changes and additions: a new essay has been written (Ch. I) that should function as an introduction and a sort of frame filling in the broader context of Allston's and Hawthorne's European experience and its meaning for them as American artists, highlighting briefly what may be seen as the American paradox of seeking a national cultural identity in Europe and the vigorous critical debate that held the centre of the attention of American intellectuals in the nineteenth century.

I wish to thank Guido Fink for his illuminating introductory essay, "Eppur si muove!", which is no doubt the most stimulating piece in the book.

Gabriella Micks

1. "Bright, Peerless Italy": The Meaning of Italy for Washington Allston and his Art", *Europe and America Criss-Crossing Perspectives 1788-1848*, ed. by Jacques Portes, Paris, 1987 pp. 179-220; "The Innocent Abroad": Intention and Achievement in Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*", *Itinerari* (n.s.) XVI, n. 1 (aprile 1977), 29-74.

EPPUR SI MUOVE!

Watching the statue of Giordano Bruno through the broken window-pane of his shabby apartment in Piazza Campode' Fiori, Clem, the very angry and not too young protagonist of Leslie Fiedler's novel, *The Second Stone* (1963), somehow feels that Bruno still nurses,

amid cries of fresh fish, his hatred for the Church that had burned him. *Eppur si muove*, Clem imagined him muttering after three hundred years, though he knew really that those had been the words of Galileo, that Bruno had died for - for what? He could not remember (1).

An intellectual, a Bohemian, an exile from the "ugliness" of America and maturity as well as from his wife and family, Clem is certainly no innocent abroad; but while the novel, being a novel written by a literary critic, abounds in references to various authors and to Mark Twain in particular (Clem is short for *Clemens*; *Mark* is the name of his Jewish double, etc.), the confusion between Bruno and Galileo might be typical indeed of Twain's travellers, dazed and perplexed as they are by the enormous number of dead artists, Popes, Emperors and historical figures all pushing each other in the narrow, cluttered Italian territory ("Is he dead?" they always ask of their Ciceroni, when being told stories about Michelangelo or Giotto or Julius Caesar; and usually their suspicion proves right) (2). Actually nothing moves in the piazza, which, as Clem looks down, has been "flushed down between the empty pushcarts, eel's flesh and cod's head and broccoli stump washed to the gutters that gleamed fitfully from the fronts of cafes", and "the noise of buying and selling was gone" (p. 97). It is one of those moments - so rare and so much cherished by fictional Americans exploring the streets and the piazzas of the fictional Rome - when the chaos and the excitement of the Roman traffic subsides; and the city, a vacant scenario, may finally look like the mythical "Roma Immortalis" rhetorically overpraised by Francis Marion Crawford and many others. Fiedler's Clem, at least, is fair enough to be equally disturbed by the members of the American colony and by the natives; but Hawthorne, for one, in his *Notebooks* never missed an opportunity of pointing out that modern Italians were rather intolerable:

I wonder whether the ancient Romans were as dirty a people as we everywhere find those who have succeeded them; for there seems to be something in the places inhabited by Romans, or made famous in their history, and in the monuments of every kind that they raised, that puts people in mind

of their earthly necessities, and invites them to delile therewith whatever temple, column, ruined palace or triumphal arch may be nearest at hand (3).

Among filth, rotten vegetables, musty straw and "running rivulets of dissolving nastiness", Hawthorne's Rome, as it appears in the *Notebooks* (the above-quoted lines being actually devoted to the nearby town of Bolsena), is not too different from Fiedler's washed out Campode' Fiori, or indeed from Fiedler's eroticized and grotesque parody of the whole city, where "tumescent alleys" discharge themselves "into the occasional squares... with the release and spatter of an orgasm" (p. 72). Perhaps the contrast between the static, picturesque ideal of the "Eternal City", and the teeming life of its streets, alleys and piazzas may be the hidden motive behind the so called "Stendhal's syndrome" and the many cases of dizziness or total loss of consciousness experienced by foreign tourists in Italy to this very day (4). Not the awesome, impressive, overwhelming beauty of the monuments, but the ugliness of the human or subhuman beings tottering among those ruins, and spoiling their spectacle, would be responsible for this ancient but recently discovered disease. In any case, if the often repeated remark that Hawthorne's Italian experience would have been happier without the Italians seems to be a sort of kind understatement (5), Fiedler's Clem does need a native chorus in his Rome ("Let's pretend we're Romans gawking at them gawking at us", p. 83). Generally, however, the fewer Italians are around among those romantic ruins, the better - an unflattering (to us) rule that holds for both James and Twain, as well as for such comparatively recent movies as the celebrated Fifties comedy *Roman Holiday* (Wyler, 1953) (6).

Even if Clem (ens) Stone is one halt of some sort of modern Mark Twain, and the American lady he falls in love with is described by Clem himself as a modern Daisy Miller (and a new Elsie Dinsmore, and Marilyn Monroe), Fiedler's novel bears a special resemblance to *The Marble Faun* (1860), one of the works discussed by Gabriella Micks in the present work. The woman's name is Hilda, to begin with; and the novel opens under the vaulted ceiling of the Capuchins, where the modern Hilda, who is pregnant, does something that Hawthorne's snow maiden would never have done - she vomits. "Come on now", Clem tells her. "The game is over. School's out. The tour bus has broken down. Nathaniel Hawthorne is dead, and they have put up signs reading; NO MORE WALKING ON WATER" (p. 21). To a certain extent, *The Second Stone* might even be considered, among other things, a parody and a rewriting of *The Marble Faun* - though by no means a "copy" of the sort that Hilda herself produces, apparently with striking aesthetic results, in Hawthorne's romance (7). Perhaps in his novel Fiedler is outspoken enough to

express the opinion that Hawthorne, even if bitterly disappointed by Rome and the Romans, could never openly utter, not even in the relative secrecy of the *Notebooks*:

"You don't live in a country, you live in a cemetery. Not only in your underground hole here (*the Chiesa dei Cappuccini*), but out there on the Via Veneto too, in the Piazza di Spagna, on the Campidoglio, in the Vatican. The Vatican is a cemetery too! (...) A cemetery-whorehouse! You peddle your dead to the tourists. You sell your dead mothers. Pimps! Povera Italia!" (p. 14).

Ironically enough, this outburst of Clem's is totally lost on his audience, except of course Hilda: the janitor of the museum, and two bearded Franciscans, understanding only the last two words, nod vigorously. In a way they are right: Clem, and Fiedler, are only expressing their passionate love for a city and a country that, since the times of Henry James, has always evoked strong personal, if not erotic, passions in American literary pilgrims, and it is only too natural that such passion must end in the painful discovery of a betrayal. Gabriella Micks is very subtle in describing these mixed feelings, and in discovering the real, hidden motivation behind both enthusiasm and vituperation - that is the search, through the Otherness of a foreign country, of a national identity. Personally I feel she does an excellent job in vindicating the relevance of *The Marble Faun* in the Hawthorne canon against adverse criticism, and in boldly admitting that Hawthorne is, in fact, deadly serious when he invokes "purification by fire" for Rome and for any other city: whoever remembers - and admires, as I do - her fine, perceptive reading of *Rappaccini's Daughter* will not be surprised by the critical skill she demonstrates in playing with the various characters' points of view, or in evaluating the whole novel on the only level that may do justice to Hawthorne's achievement, that is the dream-like atmosphere aptly described by Borges in a famous essay (8). She would probably be the right person to explore, with gusto and sensitivity, the whole route - from the evil smells, the "Roman fever" and the mysterious infections poisoning the atmosphere of the Eternal City in the writings of Hawthorne and James all the way down to the latest versions of such miasmatic effluvia, as evoked by *The Second Stone*, or Tennessee Williams's *The Roman Spring of Mrs Stone* (1950), or the labyrinths of Malamud's "Italian" stories.

Between *The Marble Faun* and *The Second Stone*, as everybody well knows, there is an interval of one century - one hundred years of dramatic changes that in a way were already self-evident in Hawthorne's times - but not in his book. Due to the internal immigration, the population in Rome would

increase at the unprecedented rate of 252% in forty years only (1861-1901) (9), and no aspect of life in the city would of course remain the same. Yet, there are so many recurring motifs in the "American" Rome, in Rome as a text and as the center of Otherness, that one wonders whether those writers, even if as sensitive as Henry James or John Cheever, really looked around or they were content with looking at pre-existing texts and stereotypes; unless latent chauvinism prevents us from appreciating the direction and the very sense of a movement ("eppur si muove...") we are part of. Clifford Geertz has recently described the dangers, for the anthropologist, of the "being there - writing here" syndrome, i.e. the transformation of a "postcard experience" into the affirmation of one's capability of understanding "different" worlds and cultures, while building one's own image of an anthropologist among other colleagues; and his diagnosis holds no doubt for fiction writers as well (10). Hawthorne and Fiedler, in any case, are entirely innocent in this respect: their Roman backdrops are intriguing enough for a quasi-Gothic mystery never to be solved and/or the hysterical pressures of a modern international convention during the Cold War, but they are never entirely "foreign" - one may even feel, especially in the second case, the desperate effort of estranging and alienating a setting that in itself would easily prove too familiar and easy-going. What mostly changes, one feels, is the *pace*: Miriam and Kenyon could still leisurely walk around as *flâneurs*, while Clem, Mark, Hilda and the other Americans, Italians and Italian-Americans involved in that crazy love Conference are rushing like the madmen they are, as if experiencing the *vitesse* that Virilio and others emphasize as the most typical quality of metropolitan life (11). But they do change as well, and Rome really affects and modifies their way of life: if Hawthorne's Hilda fights heroically to remain the protestant Saint she is at the beginning - and *almost* succeeds - Fiedler's modern Hilda dangerously flirts with the idea of becoming, like Clem, one of those moral hermaphrodites, neither American nor European, that the real Mark Twain, quite serious just for once, was so afraid of (12).

Going to America, in the European imagination as well as in the American one, is always described as a rejuvenating experience, more or less an adrenalin shot. Travelling in the opposite direction, *from* the U.S. to the Old World, dangerously exposes to the discovery of death and decay, but has a positive connotation as well - it does offer an escape from the hectic and neurotic pressures of Modernity, thus proving particularly disappointing when the supposed stillness of Antiquity shows unpredictable signs of change: *eppur si muove*.... In the marvellous opening chapters of *The Marble*

Faun - closer, in a way, to choreography and ballet than to prose narrative - Kenyon confesses to be weary of the celebrated Dying Gladiator:

I used to admire this statue exceedingly... but, latterly, I find myself getting weary and annoyed that the man should be such a length of time leaning on his arm in the very act of death. If he is so terribly hurt, why does he not sink down and die without further ado? (14).

The text itself *si muove*, starts leaning on itself, threatens to fall down: such descriptions as the one of the Gladiator migrate, so to speak, from the Murray guidebook Hawthorne always consulted to the pocket notebooks, almost telegraphic in their brevity, then to the novel, sometimes curiously resembling Murray again (15). While it never solves, despite the Epilogue, the many mysteries of Miriam or the seemingly less relevant but equally morbid ones about Donatello's ears (his reaction when his friends try to "uncover" them by removing his sidelocks is quite revealing), the book continues to repeat and to reformulate that very question, the question of survival and of death-in-life: perhaps Hawthorne's only real curiosity about the enigma of Rome.

Eppur si muove. Sometimes old texts stand still, lay buried in forgetfulness, and *The Marble Faun*, a "failure" to so many critics, is certainly one of them. But in some occasion they may come to new life, thanks, as Maurice Blanchot would say, to the "Lazare veni foras" of a particularly perceptive reader. Such reader may *rewrite* the book, as Fiedler did, of course parodically but also, paradoxically, "making it new" and somehow discovering its relevance to the plight of modern Rome and modern pilgrims; or he/she may analyze it in an original and provocative way, as Gabriella Micks - and this to me, a former colleague, is once again no surprise - does in this work, extending her analysis to Allston and others. Perhaps her book may render us wiser and at the same time less happy, as Jefferson wrote to his nephew about travelling, in an eloquent letter that Gabriella justly quotes in full: after parting with certain books, and certain cities, our eyes, in Jefferson's words, may be "forever turned back".

Guido Fink

NOTES

1. Leslie Fiedler; *The Second Stone: A Love Story*, London: Heinemann, 1966. Page numbers given in parenthesis derive from this edition.

2. On this aspect (and others) of Mark Twain's not-so-comical *Innocents Abroad*, one can see the Afterword by Leslie Fiedler himself to the New American Library edition (1966).

3. This is part of the Oct 17, 1858 entry in the Notebooks. The Centenary Edition XIV, *French and Italian Notebooks*, ed. by Thomas Woodson, Ohio U.P., 1980.

4. Dr Graziella Magherini, a Florentine researcher, has recently analyzed a series of curious cases in a book, *La sindrome di Stendhal*, to be published in Florence by Il Ponte alle Grazie.

5. See Edward Citelli, "Hawthorne and the Italian", *Studi americani*, 14 (1968), p. 89.

6. One may refer to the disparaging remarks about Giovanelli in James's *Daisy Miller* - unless they are to be ascribed to Winterbourne as narrator; or to Mark Twain's - and Hawthorne's, and so many others' - remarks about beggars etc. Curiously, "smallness" seems to be one of the most frequently used connotations. The way Ossoli, Margaret Fuller's husband, is described in the *Notebooks* is also a well-known case in the point (pp. 154-7). As to William Wyler's film, it is significant that the protagonist of this Cinderella-in-reverse story, the Princess of a mysterious kingdom which is actually very easy to be guessed, escapes from the sutlocating routine of the Embassy in order to merge with "real" Roman life, of course incognito; but the natives remain extras in the background, while she has a quasi-romance with an American journalist.

7. For the discussion on Hilda's copies, as distinct from "Guido machines" and "Raphaelic machines" - an odd mixture of Puritanical suspicion of art, and of pre-Benjamin observations about the reproduction of art works, see Chapter 6 in *The Marble Faun*, (ed. by D. Levin, New York, Dell, 1967, p. 72.

8. The Borges essay is in *Otras Inquisiciones* (It. transl. *Altre inquisizioni*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1973, pp. 53 ff.). Gabriella Micks's essay on *Rappaccini's Daughter* appeared in *Studi Americani*, 17, Roma 1971, pp. 29ff.

9. On the changes in Rome and other Italian cities in the nineteenth century, see Ottavio Barie', *L'Italia nell'Ottocento*, Torino: UTET, 1964, p. 246, *passim*.

10. Clifford Geertz, "Being There - Writing Here", in *Dialogue*, n. 84, Feb. 1989, pp. 58ff.

11. See Paul Virilio, *Vitesse et politique*, Paris: Galilee, 1978; *L'insecurité du territoire*, Paris: Stock, 1966.

12. About Mark Twain's linguistic - but also moral - hermaphrodites ("a thing that is neither male nor female, neither fish, flesh nor fowl", etc), see *Innocents Abroad*, 133, 168.

13. *The Marble Faun*, p. 36.

14. See Thomas Woodson's remarks in the Centenary edition of the *Notebooks*, pp. 873, 914, *passim*.

CHAPTER ONE

"Romance and poetry ... need
ruin to make them grow":

As the United States took on shape and stability as a nation after the Revolution, Americans showed greater interest in the culture of continental Europe, feeling part of the British tradition and proud of it. At the same time, for patriotic reasons, they naturally wished to lean on it no longer quite so heavily as before: the war of 1812 had confirmed the political independence of the United States from Great Britain, and the need for intellectual independence was increasingly felt in the early nineteenth century. An important question raised by the new situation concerned how much of the traditional was to be retained, perhaps in a modified form, and how much must be invented; the "Americanists" insisted that the new nation should turn away from the decayed, corrupt, and feudal Europe, and substitute a republican culture for its outworn traditions (1).

"America must be as independent in literature, as she is in politics", wrote N. Webster in 1783, expressing the hope that she would be "as distinguished for the superiority of her literary improvements as she is already by the liberality of her civil and ecclesiastical institutions". American critics, editors and authors clamoured for the prompt creation of a native, indigenous, original American art, and hundreds of hopeful predictions of greatness and exhortations appeared in journals and magazines in the years after 1776, whose main task seemed to be "to foster American genius" in a climate of fervent literary nationalism (2). Despite brave pronouncements that they had repudiated Europe, Americans however could not escape history: they might insist that their political institutions were unique and non-European, but they could not invent a new language, completely new forms of literature and the arts "untainted" by the Old World. Yet, as H.M. Jones says, they certainly tried.

There was a demand for a literature that would affirm American independence in a rejection of European subjects and forms, reflecting the indigenous American conditions: in Channing's words, "By national literature ... we mean the expression of a nation's mind in writing", and many shared his confidence that the American mind could discover its own cultural sovereignty. According to Channing, the future movement of American thought *toward* a reciprocal relation with European culture was to be a further affirmation of its very independence from that tradition. Yet American writers

were caught in the paradox of the American mind, defined by the European philosophical heritage but at the same time to be constituted anew by a repudiation of that tradition (3).

It was being increasingly realized, however, also by the "Party of Hope", that as yet America had not produced "poets, orators, critics, and historians equal to the most celebrated of ... Greece and Italy" (4), and many proclaimed that some handicaps in the American scene made it very difficult, if not impossible, for the literature and arts of the New World to equal, let alone rival, those of the Old, while some Federalist critics insisted that the United States was not self-sufficient, and that culture could only live and flourish in a cosmopolitan context. In *Kavenagh* (1849), a delightful satire of extreme Americanism, Longfellow sums up succinctly the great cultural debate, while poking fun at those who insisted that American literature must be great because American landscape is grand: Mr Hathaway is made to proclaim that "We want a national literature commensurate with our mountains and rivers, ... the largest in the world!" (5).

The Americanists could seemingly claim Goethe on their side: he had sometimes thought of himself as a possible emigrant and liked to talk about America, which in a poetic greeting to the New World he congratulated on possessing no ruined castles. America was better off than Europe, he explained, as she lacked those useless reminders of feudal strife, and her future poets would be able to dispense with old legends and stories (6). Many shared his prejudice against old castles, cathedrals or old churches, monuments of superstition and injustice, while others held that American writing could not be rich and full because the American landscape lacked historical, feudal, medioeval, human, classical, or family associations; it must be added that in general it was the critics who rejoiced in the "newness" of America, while the absence of all those associations we have mentioned was painfully felt by writers and artists, who considered themselves cut off from the mainstream cultural tradition of the West, from the rich artistic inheritance of the past that made the flourishing of the arts still possible in the Old World. As they were struggling towards self-definition, American artists turned increasingly, inevitably, to Europe - their past and their heritage, their teacher and their challenge (7).

By the end of the eighteenth century, American travellers abroad began to observe European customs with a far keener eye than their predecessors had done: no longer were American visitors to Europe merely businessmen or government officials, now they began to include representatives of all the arts and professions (8). In the early days of the Republic the American abroad felt himself a representative of his country, with a dual responsibility,

to show Europeans that an American could be a gentleman, a writer or an artist, and to report back to his countrymen about his experiences and observations (9). The diaries and journals that have survived illustrate a sharpened awareness of political and social conditions as well as of the rich cultural and artistic European tradition whose treasures were now made available to American intellectuals.

The utilitarianism of the period is still reflected in the writings of men like Jefferson and Franklin, both of whom were anxious to have their young country adopt some of the methods and cultural enterprises of the Old World, but insisted that American travellers to Europe should only concern themselves with useful things like architecture and agriculture, as Jefferson said in the outline he prepared for his friends going to Europe, entitled "Objects of Attention for an American": painting and sculpture were "too expensive for the state of wealth among us. It would be useless, therefore, and preposterous to make ourselves connoisseurs in these arts. They are worth seeing, but not studying" (10). At the same time, their writings show a strong patriotic feeling and, indeed, something akin to a spiritual hostility or xenophobia.

In the beginning, it was only natural that there should be a juxtaposition of America as a myth of hope and renewal, and Europe as a symbol of despair and decay, "grown old in folly, corruption and tyranny", as N. Webster wrote. Americans started contrasting the Old World with the New, and found their native country full of the simple virtues that had disappeared from ancient, sophisticated, corrupted Europe: some years later, in the 1820's, American orators were rejoicing in the progress and seemingly unbounded potentialities of their country, while contemplating a deteriorating Europe with mingled pity and contempt. "Shun the lures of Europe", admonished T. Dwight in a poem (1794), and many echoed him: among those who expressed distrust of Europe were Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Hamilton, Madison, and others, while the classic final statement of anti-Europeanism is to be found in Washington's Farewell Address (11).

Yet at the turn of the century, a significant shift in perspective occurred: a sense of widening horizons, the assertion of culture as an universal inheritance, and the interest in the past characterized the early nineteenth century in America, powerfully contributing to the rise of a spirit of cosmopolitanism. The attraction towards Europe was getting stronger and stronger (though of course it had been felt in America since colonial times) especially among American intellectuals and artists, though again with reservations and occasional outbursts of chauvinism.

Americans as a whole did not begin to have a real sense of their cultural and social identity until the early decades of the nineteenth century: this was

made possible by the enormous extension of travel following the establishment of regular packet service between Boston and New York and Continental ports. Later, with the advent of steam, hundreds of Americans began to go abroad, but already in the latter half of the eighteenth century the American version of the Grand Tour was well established, though some had their reservations about its utility and wholesomeness. Even such a sophisticated intellectual like Thomas Jefferson, for instance, felt that the advantages to be reaped by young, eager Americans abroad were possibly outweighed by serious disadvantages, and that the psychological cost of an European education might indeed be very high. In 1787, he wrote of foreign travel to his nephew Peter Carr in these sombre, rather daunting terms:

Travelling. This makes men wiser, but less happy. When men of sober age travel, they gather knowledge which they may apply usefully to their country, but they are subject ever after to recollections mixed with regret; their affections are weakened by being extended over more objects, and they learn new habits which cannot be gratified when they return home. Young men who travel are exposed to all these inconveniences in a higher degree, to others still more serious, and do not acquire that wisdom for which a previous foundation is requisite by repeated and just observations at home. The glare of pomp and pleasure is analogous to the motion of their blood, it absorbs all their affection and attention, they are torn from it as from the only good in this world, and return to their home as to a place of exile and condemnation. Their eyes are forever turned back to the object they have lost, and its recollection poisons the residue of their lives.

Their first and most delicate passions are hackneyed on unworthy objects here, and they carry home only the dregs, insufficient to make themselves or any body else happy. ... There is no place where your pursuit of knowledge will be so little obstructed by foreign objects as in your own country, nor any wherein the virtues of the heart will be less exposed to be weakened (12).

In the same year, R. Tyler, a dramatist, stated that foreign travel was a betrayal of the American spirit, and N. Webster urged it should be discouraged or even prohibited, while later Emerson declared that "It is for want of self-culture that the superstition of Travelling, whose idols are Italy, England, Egypt, retains its fascination for all educated Americans.... Travelling is a fool's paradise" (13).

Yet even those who seemed more uncompromising in their pronouncements against the Old World revealed the fundamental ambiguity of the American attitude to Europe, where a sense of American exceptionalism easily shifted to a larger feeling of kinship and the cosmopolitanism of the En-

lightenment reasserted itself while nostalgia and rejection alternated or coexisted in the American response to Europe (14). Thus Emerson himself, who had written "the wise man stays at home", visited the Old World three times. Like Jefferson before him, in his travels he was mostly motivated by his concern for the intellectual and spiritual development of his own country: "We came to Europe" he wrote in his Journal "to learn what man can - what is the uttermost which social man has yet done" (15). Unlike most American visitors, Emerson was not attracted by the European past for its own sake: he declared he was "an endless seeker with no Past at my back", and his faith in America led him to believe that in the New World there must inevitably be a new culture, a spontaneous generation from the soil, without parents or intelligible causes. Yet it was from the European past that the Sage of Concord borrowed the weapons with which he cut his connections with it (16).

The "search for a usable past", as Van Wyck Brooks called it, pointed the way to Europe, while America and its culture were being defined by comparison and contrast with Europe. The "complex fate" of Americans, as Henry James rightly said, entailed "fighting against a superstitious valuation of Europe", and indeed much that was written in America in the nineteenth century was informed either by adulation for Europe or reaction against it (17). A cultural heritage, as André Malraux said, "is not transmitted; it must be conquered" (18): thus, in a period when artistic nationalism was being theorized and encouraged, nevertheless artists and writers felt the need to visit Europe and repossess themselves of their cultural inheritance, while the number of American visitors to Europe steadily increased as transportation improved in the nineteenth century: by its close, more than 100,000 Americans went abroad each year. Hawthorne noted, while at Liverpool, that "no people on earth have such vagabond habits as ours", and no inveighing against foreign travel as dangerous, unpatriotic and enervating could dissuade young men eager to start on the Grand Tour, which became customary after the Civil War though already a status symbol from the late eighteenth century, and traditionally covered Britain, France, and Italy (19).

Italy became increasingly popular in the course of the nineteenth century not only with American artists of all sorts, but also with well-to-do Americans: it became fashionable, in the 1840's and 1850's, to winter in Rome, visiting studios and art galleries and buying works of art to take back home. As W. Irving said, "Men discover taste and fancy in Italy", as it offered the kind of aesthetic and intellectual experience that was not available in the United States, and that was felt to be necessary if the ambition to establish a national art and literature was to be fulfilled: it was the mecca of American artists till

after 1850. In Rome, Florence and Venice there were colonies of American sculptors (American sculpture was "mainly born and nourished in Italy", according to H.M. Jones), artists, writers and musicians. Some of these were to become expatriates, while others - like W. Allston, Peale, and others - went back to the United States with high hopes for the future of art in America. Italy was seen as the place where the ideal world of art and beauty could be best appreciated, and to Washington Allston as to Benjamin West, to Hawthorne and to Henry James it was the country which most fully and most perfectly embodied the greatest achievements in the Western tradition of the fine arts.

The first Americans to go to Italy and to produce significant records of their Italian experience were, accordingly, artists: after Benjamin West, the first American of all, it would seem, to visit Rome, many followed, and by the end of the colonial period a tradition of Italian sojourn had been established among American artists (20). Washington Allston, who revived this tradition in 1804, according to N. Wright may be said more than any other American to have introduced Italy to his countrymen: through him, a recognizable body of American intellectuals for the first time became aware of Italy as "usable past", and this crucial function of his art and his personality was stressed by Emerson when he mourned, in his death, the disappearance of "the solitary link ... between America and Italy" from the American artistic and cultural scene. As can be seen from *Monaldi* (1822), his Italian romance whose protagonist, a Roman painter, is both the type of the Romantic artist and the author's double, Allston saw his mission as mediating between the rich heritage of the Old Masters which Europe and most of all Rome had made available to him, and the American present, as yet lacking a cultural identity of its own. He had felt the need to go to Europe, to Rome, in order to discover the past - his past, and learn not only the "grammar" of his art, but also how to channel his creative energies into forms that would reflect with fidelity his double - and not yet self-divided - identity as the heir to Europe and her artistic riches, and simultaneously as a deeply American artist. There is no question, I believe, of divided allegiances with Allston: his life-long devotion to what Europe and the great masters of the past have taught him is never in conflict with his aim to create and establish a new type of art that will be truly American. Paradoxically, the discovery of Italy enabled Allston to be the first, perhaps, truly American artist, precisely because his personal, intimate recovery of the past and his crucial experience in Rome helped him to define his identity, his role and his strategies as an American artist.

Many Americans were stimulated and encouraged to go abroad by the large number of accounts of European experiences published by various

authors upon their return home: as regards Italy alone, at least a hundred professional writers, and as many other Americans who visited the country during the nineteenth century published records of their visits or works concerning Italy, especially fiction (21). Byron's enormous vogue in the United States powerfully affected American travellers, who, like Longfellow, went to Rome with *Childe Harold* as their guide and, as Hawthorne wryly points out in *The Marble Faun*, in paying "the inevitable visit by moonlight" to the Coliseum exalted themselves "with raptures that were Byron's, not their own" (22). Ironically, *The Marble Faun* itself would later be used almost as a guidebook by Hawthorne's compatriots (23). It was also due to Washington Irving's books that Americans abroad looked for ruins, cathedrals, and other historical landmarks so sadly lacking in their native land: like him, they felt the "feverish excitement" that gripped him when he first sighted Europe, memorably described in "The Voyage". Irving spoke for literally hundreds of Americans when he wrote:

None but those who have experienced it can form an idea of the delicious throng of sensations which rush into an American's bosom when he first comes in sight of Europe. There is a volume of associations with the very name. It is the land of promise, teeming of everything of which his childhood has heard or of which his studious years have pondered (24).

Most of all, he spoke for the nineteenth-century American artists and writers when he significantly reversed, in this passage, the traditional roles of Europe and America: now it was Europe that held the promise of a solution to the problem facing Irving, Allston, Hawthorne, Greenough, Henry James and countless others - how to be an American artist. They realized that their only - at least, to them - hope lay in visiting, learning from, and coming to artistic terms with the Old World, as it promised - indeed, pressed on one in dazzling profusion - the past, and hence, it was felt, the key to the future of American art and letters.

Most Americans visiting Europe felt they were on a pilgrimage to the romantic past, on a sentimental journey in search of the picturesque and the retrospective, and like Irving - who reinforced a point of view that influenced American education and literature for half a century - they felt the longing "to wander over the scenes of renowned achievements - to tread, as it were, in the footsteps of antiquity - to loiter about the ruined castle - to meditate over the falling tower" (25). America was unrivalled for "the sublime and beautiful" of her natural scenery, and is here presented more traditionally, as "full of youthful promise" (as yet unfulfilled):

But Europe held forth the charms of storied and poetical associations. There were to be seen the masterpieces of art, the refinement of highly cultivated society, the quaint peculiarities of ancient and local custom. ... Europe was rich in the accumulated treasures of age. Her very ruins told the history of times gone by, and every mouldering stone was a chronicle (26).

It is precisely of those "accumulated treasures of age" that Irving and other American writers and artists wanted to repossess themselves, and how to lay claim to an ambiguous past was a cause for anxiety for all of them: even Irving, with his enthusiasm and his poise, when he described his landing in Europe wrote: "I stepped upon the land of my forefathers - but I felt I was a stranger in the land", and used an epigraph to "The Author's Account of Himself", from which I have quoted the well-known, glowing tribute to Europe above, with a quotation from Lyly's *Euphues* ("... so the traveller that straggleth from his owne country is in a short time transformed into so monstrous a shape ..."). Yet whatever misgivings Irving might have entertained, like many other Americans he wished to lose himself (at least temporarily) "among the shadowy grandeurs of the past" in order also to escape "from the commonplace realities" of the American present: he was so taken with "the delightful scenes" of Rome and the Campagna, where he spent a few weeks in 1805 with W. Allston, that he entertained the idea of becoming a painter himself and of living with his friend in such congenial surroundings, where "the study of the sublime and beautiful" seemed so effortless and rewarding. Washington Irving was the first American author to be recognized in Europe as a major literary figure with a mind and art of his own: he was also a sort of ambassador to Europe from America and to America from Europe, greatly contributing to bringing about a truce in the critical war waged between the Old and the New World in the first decades of the nineteenth century (27).

J. Fenimore Cooper, who was the first American to deal seriously with Anglo-American relationships in *Gleanings in Europe* (1837) contributed *Notions of the Americans* (1828) to the transatlantic dialogue: Cooper's theme in Europe, the superiority of American principles, after his return to his native country became the inferiority of American life (28). It was the European trip, as one of his biographers observes, that made Cooper self-consciously aware of the great American questions, while every question about American culture, at that time and later, involved Europe. It was in the perspective from Europe that Americans first became aware of their own style and identity, and acquired a deeper understanding of their national society: Cooper's pamphlet, though at times one-sided, is free from cant and shows

a keen insight into the strength and weakness of his homeland. He was acutely aware of the difficulties besetting artists and writers in the United States, and *Notions of the Americans* contains the classic statement of the poverty of materials seriously crippling American writers:

The second obstacle against which American literature has to contend is the poverty of materials. There is scarcely an ore which contributes to the wealth of the author, that is found, here, in veins as rich as in Europe. There are no annals for the historian; no follies (beyond the most vulgar and common place) for the satirist; no manners for the dramatist; no obscure fictions for the writer of romance; no gross and hardy offences against decorum for the moralist; nor any of the rich artificial auxiliaries of poetry. The weakest hand can extract a spark from the flint, but it would baffle the strength of a giant to attempt kindling a flame with a pudding stone. I very well know there are theorists who assume that the society and institutions of this country are, or ought to be, particularly favourable to novelties and variety. But ... I have never seen a nation so much alike in my life, as the people of the United States (29).

To the end of his life, Cooper defended the American artist's right of access to Europe as part of his heritage, and in complaining that the writer of fiction in America must face a social scene that is arid and featureless, he was echoing an earlier statement by Charles Brockden Brown and looking forward to Hawthorne and Henry James: many others, like Timothy Dwight, wondered how could an American "compensate the want of ancient castles, ruined abbeys, and fine pictures?" (30). English critics, too, were not slow to point out the disabilities under which the New World was labouring while trying to establish a national literature, and the anonymous critic writing in *Blackwood's* in 1819, for instance, started his list of those "items of high civilization" so necessary to writers and so utterly lacking in America by baldly stating: "There is nothing to awaken fancy in that land of dull realities" (31). Dwight's plaintive question found an answer in Emerson's sanguine pronouncements on America's literary destinies: not at all worried (as he affirmed) by the difficulties besetting many American authors of the time, he looked upon the discontent of the literary class "as a mere announcement that they find themselves in the state of mind of their fathers, and regret the coming state as untried; as a boy dreads the water before he has learned that he can swim" (32). More specifically, in "The Poet" Emerson affirms that "We have yet had no genius in America, with tyrannous eye, which knew the value of our incomparable material", which appears flat and dull only "to dull people", and is therefore unsung: "Yet America is a poem in our eyes" (33). Mouldering ruins, castles, ruined abbeys and the like are therefore manifes-

ily redundant for Emerson, who in "The American Scholar" ("our Yankee version of a lecture by Abelard", as J.R. Lowell said) gave the most authoritative and popular version of American exceptionalism in the field of letters: "We have listened too long to the courtly Muses of Europe. ... We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds" (34).

Emerson's complacency and high hopes for America were shared by several men of letters, such as the New York Americanists, and the problems that had long harassed some of the most thoughtful writers of the New World had been airily versified away by James K. Paulding, who wrote *The Backwoodsman* (1818) to show young American writers that they had at home "the means of attaining to novelty of subject", and should no longer, therefore, turn to "Europe's old Rag-fair" to deck themselves "in cast-off finery" (35), and many others shared Emerson's rejection of the Muses of Europe. He insisted that his fellow American writers were too eager to borrow from other cultures, while art, in his opinion, begins with the writer's personal discovery of the form and style necessary to him: even if "too shrewd and practiced a writer to fall for any patriotic distortion of the laws of art", it is indeed evident that Emerson is demanding an "American", a "new" style on a national basis that will deal with the "incomparable" American material (36). On the other hand, most artists and writers of the time felt they had a very direct and practical problem to solve if they were to have an identity as American artists: what was there left to write, and how, as craftsmen, were they to get not only new subjects, but a new personal idiom, recovering and redefining their relationship to the past. These nagging questions were best formulated by Nathaniel Hawthorne, one of the most articulate American writers in denouncing much in the same fashion as Cooper, the essential poverty of his "dear native land" as a source of artistic inspiration and strategies, painfully aware that it was easier to demand a great native literature, as the Americanists were confidently doing, than to produce it.

One cannot speak of the cultural debate in America during the nineteenth century as a juxtaposition between Americanists and "Europeanists", as both parties aimed at the creation of a new, truly American literature: where they differed, was as to means necessary and available in order to achieve this common aim. In a sense, we might say this debate was the American version of the "Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes" that had raged in Europe a couple of centuries earlier, much over the same issues and using the same arguments. While the earlier European artists and writers wished to stop being on their intellectual knees before the classics, in order to establish a truly national culture and art - thus, a truly "modern" art, reflecting

the new historical and social configuration of modern Europe - Americanists like Duyckinck, Paulding and Emerson also wished, like their rebellious European forbears, to break from what seemed to them an exhausted tradition in order to "make it new", to create new forms of art that would reflect a new national identity. Unfortunately, this was easier said than done, and the American "Moderns" often felt, like their pro-European adversaries, that they were fighting a losing battle, though Emerson and other extreme Americanists never acknowledged any doubts as to the final issue. Hawthorne and his "pen-and-ink men", on the other hand, while equally loud in their denunciations of existing adverse conditions, were more cautious, more doubtful of success, though they valiantly fought on the side of the "Ancients" of the Old World.

Things were made even more complicated by the same persons, at times, fighting on both sides simultaneously, thereby making it more difficult for literary historians and critics to disentangle the various strands that went into the composite cultural picture of the period. Hawthorne in this sense may be seen as typical: he sides habitually with the "Ancients", lamenting the poverty and thinness of the American scene, and phrasing his attack both in general and specific terms, juxtaposing, that is, either "the old countries" or Italy to young, jejune America:

In the old countries, with which fiction has long been conversant, ... the romancer ... is allowed a license with regard to every-day probability, in view of the improved effects which he is bound to produce thereby. Among ourselves, on the contrary, there is as yet no such Faery Land, so like the real world, that, in a suitable remoteness, one cannot well tell the difference, but with an atmosphere of strange enchantment, beheld through which the inhabitants have a propriety of their own. This atmosphere is what the American romancer needs. In its absence, the beings of imagination are compelled to show themselves in the same category as actually living mortals; a necessity that generally renders the paint and pasteboard of their composition but too painfully discernible (37).

More famous is the same denunciation as formulated in the Preface to *The Marble Faun* (1860), where he contrasts more explicitly than before the rich, suggestive complexity of the Old World in general and of Italy and Rome in particular as a congenial seedbed for the creation of art, to the barren, brash simplicity and rootlessness of America. Now that he had actually visited Europe and lived in Italy, he could bear witness to his less fortunate countrymen that Italy was indeed a "sort of poetic or faery precinct" where his

art could come to life, nourished by the rich, centuries old, luxuriantly fertile Italian soil.

Italy, as the site of his romance, was chiefly valuable to him as affording a sort of poetic or fairy precinct, where actualities would not be so terribly insisted upon as they are, and must needs be, in America. No author, without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a commonplace prosperity, in broad and simple daylight, as is happily the case with my dear native land. It will be very long, I trust, before romance-writers may find congenial and easily handled themes, either in the annals of our stalwart Republic, or in any characteristic and probable events of our individual lives. Romance and poetry, ivy, lichens, and wallflowers, need ruin to make them grow (38).

Yet Hawthorne often adopts an ambiguous stance also as regards the *Querelle*, suddenly switching sides within the same work and inveighing, in the finest Americanist vein, against the "innatural", oppressive, corrupted and corrupting old Europe. Like his Kenyon, he "delighted in the picturesque bits of rustic character and manners, so little of which ever comes upon the surface of our life at home", and like his Miriam he found that Rome "was Arcadia and the Golden Age" - but the spell was easily broken. Then, Arcadia was turned by a malignant demon (the same that haunted the Roman art galleries, no doubt) into a tract "where the crimes and calamities of ages, the many battles, blood recklessly poured out and deaths of myriads, have corrupted all the soil, creating an influence that makes the air deadly to human lungs" (39).

Nowhere perhaps as in these passages and in the one quoted below is Hawthorne's notorious ambivalence more evident and intriguing:

All towns should be made capable of purification by fire, or of decay, within each half century. Otherwise, they become the hereditary haunts of vermin and noisomeness. . . . It is beautiful, no doubt, and exceedingly satisfactory to some of our natural instincts, to imagine our far posterity dwelling under the same roof-tree as ourselves. Still, when people insist on building indestructible houses, they incur, or their children do, a misfortune analogous to that of the Sybil, when she obtained the grievous boon of immortality. . . . We cannot keep them from growing old, musty, unwholesome, dreary, lull of death scents, ghosts, and murder stains; in short, such habitations as one sees everywhere in Italy, be they hovels or palaces.

"You should go with me to my native country," observed the sculptor to Donatello. "In that fortunate land, each generation has only its own scenes

and sorrows to bear. Here, it seems as if all the weary and dreary Past were piled upon the back of the Present" (40).

It is almost impossible for a reader "not unstudied" in Hawthorne's works, not to think that this whole passage is ironical: I believe, however, that Hawthorne is here, regrettably, perfectly serious, at his most Emersonian, and that Harry Levin is right, when discussing Holgrave's tirade against "the influence which Dead Men have among living affairs", "an argument which Hawthorne had set down for himself in his notebooks", observes that Hawthorne's attack on the dead hand of the Past is actually "a plea for facing the present, an affirmation more directly developed by his erstwhile Concord neighbour, Emerson: 'Our age is retrospective. It builds the sepulchres of the fathers. . . . Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe?'" (41). Hawthorne, with his characteristic, sometimes exasperating reticence, never formulated theoretically either his allegiance or his opposition to Emerson's thought: these conflicting elements, coexisting simultaneously in most of his work, are nowhere more evident than in *The Marble Faun*, where Ancients and Moderns fight their last, inconclusive battle.

It has justly been said that while examining the cultural relations between America and Europe, if Henry James had not existed, one would have had to invent him, as he is "the perfect turning-point in the spiritual tension between Old and New World" (42). His famous enumeration of the many "items of high civilization . . . absent from the texture of American life" while of course abundantly available in Europe, is far less snobbish and "parochial" than Philip Rahv and R. Chase would have us believe (43). We are all familiar with the long list that spells out "the terrible denudation" of American life, contrasted with the "denser, richer, warmer European spectacle", and James himself almost immediately undercuts the "somewhat lurid light of the indictment", yet the poverty-of-materials argument like eloquently expressed has a deeper import than the lack of picturesque properties like ruined castles and old cathedrals, though of course these were eminently desirable and greatly suggestive. What was really wrong with the United States for James, Hawthorne and others was not so much the lack of ivy - "Oh, that we could have ivy in America!" wrote Hawthorne, "What is there to beautify us, when our time of ruin comes? (44) - or of artistic masterpieces, though of course this was felt as a deprivation: it was "the thinness and flatness of the psychological landscape" (45). This is what James meant when he observed, still in the essay on Hawthorne: "it takes such an accumulation of

history and custom, such a complexity of manners and types, to form a fund of suggestion for a novelist" (46): what the American writer needed is "an enrichment of consciousness".

Not many years divided Allston from Hawthorne, and there are many points in common between them, yet in some respects their attitude to Europe was markedly different. For Allston, the early nineteenth-century version of the American Dream - the creation of a truly national art - can still come true (admittedly, with some difficulties, as in the case of "Belshazzar's Feast", but these difficulties have been greatly exaggerated by W.W. Story, H. James and others), if only one can apply what one has learned from the Old Masters about art and oneself while in the "vision clime" of Italy and the Old World in general to life and art. Allston tried to find answers to such problems as the American lack of a strong technical tradition, the proper relationship of an artist to his society, the adjustment of imaginative to practical life (47): he found most of these answers in the cluster of experiences, emotions and ideas that he associated with his memories of Italy and her art, her usable past.

Hawthorne's response to the problem and its possible solution was, predictably, more complex, more ambivalent, and in him the balance between "usable" and "useless" past was far more precarious in the intriguing ambiguities than in Allston.

The simultaneous attraction and repulsion felt by Hawthorne towards the past, towards Europe and Rome create tensions and ambiguities in the structure of the romance, set in the context of the historic depth and aesthetic richness of Rome, with its "threefold antiquity" and its "visionary splendour and magnificence" inseparable from decay and filth in a paradoxical interplay of sublimity and squalor. Hawthorne deeply felt the hold of Rome on him, and admitted it did draw into itself his heart, but "life is too short for such questionable and troublesome enjoyments". Hawthorne's unresolved double vision is reflected in the detailed vivid recreation of the Eternal City in all its manifold and contradictory aspects, its historical, religious and artistic elements and associations in *The Marble Faun*. Rome is equally the repository of living and dead art: indeed its value to the nineteenth-century Americans lay precisely in the vital presence of the masterpieces of antiquity and the Renaissance and the intense artistic life of the present, an object lesson as to the uses of the past and the possibility of drawing from its rich heritage in order to create a new, national art. It was only in Europe, and best of all in Rome, that one could realize the true import of Melville's words: "We are the heirs of all time, and with all nations we divide our inheritance": it was only there that Americans could repossess themselves of their inheritance,

and thus enable the New World to create a truly American art and literature. Not till the American had become (at least temporarily) a European, would he be able to discover himself, to define his national and cultural identity by contrast and comparison, to reassess experience, to learn an awareness of complexity, of depth - what James called an "enrichment of consciousness", without which no art can be created.

It is in this sense that we may view the paradox of the American quest for a national cultural identity in Europe: what Americans were seeking was their inheritance, viewed with ambivalent feelings but felt to be indispensable in order to establish and define a great national culture. This paradox is best expressed by Lowell in this eloquent passage on Italy:

Italy has a magnetic virtue quite peculiar to her ... She gives [the American] cheaply what gold cannot buy for him at home, a Past at once legendary and authentic, and in which he has an equal claim with every other foreigner. ... In Italy he rejoices in the recovery of his own individuality (48).

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

1. Cf. H.M.Jones, *O Strange New World*, London 1965, p.313; see also R.Nye, *1776-1830: The Cultural Life of the New Nation*, New York 1960, p.235.
2. Cf. Nye, pp.239-41, and B.T.Spencer, *The Quest for Nationality*, Syracuse 1957, *passim*.
3. Cf. J.C.Rowe, *Henry Adams and Henry James*, Ithaca, N.Y. and London 1976, pp.19-20.
4. Quoted in Nye, p.240.
5. Quoted in K.S.House, ed., *Reality and Myth in American Literature*, Greenwich, Conn. 1966, p.168.
6. Cf. H.Levin, *The Power of Blackness*, New York 1958, p.239.
7. Cf. M.J.Lasky, "America and Europe: Transatlantic Images", in A.M.Schlesinger, Jr. and M.White, eds., *Paths of American Thought*, London 1964, p.465.
8. Cf. F.MacShane, ed., *The American in Europe*, New York 1965, pp.9-10.
9. Cf. E.Earnest, *Expatriates and Patriots*, Durham, N.C. 1968, p.12.
10. Th.Jefferson, *Writings*, 17 vols., Washington 1904, XXVII, 292. Among the things worth studying, Jefferson mentions the European labourers, who should be observed especially "at the moment of their repast".
11. Cf. Jones, pp.324-6.
12. Quoted in *ibid.*, pp.10-11.
13. R.W.Emerson, "Self Reliance", *Essays*, Boston 1883, pp.69, 70.
14. Cf. Lasky, p.470.
15. Quoted in MacShane, p.101.
16. H.B.Parkes, "Emerson", in M.Konvitz and S.Wicher, eds., *Emerson. A Collection of Critical Essays*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1962, pp.121, 132.
17. Cf. House, p.97.
18. Quoted in F.O.Matthiessen, *American Renaissance*, Oxford 1968, p.xv.
19. For the Grand Tour, cf. I.Ross, *The Expatriates*, New York 1970, pp.4, 96-100.

20. Cf. N.Wright, *American Novelists in Italy*, Philadelphia 1965, p.17; see also Ross, pp.56-70; and Earnest, pp.93-127 *passim*.
21. Cf. Wright, p.20.
22. *The Marble Faun*, ed. M.Krieger, New York 1961, p.117; see also p.116.
23. Cf. Earnest, p.177.
24. W.Irving, "The Voyage", *The Sketch Book* (1820), with an Afterword by P.Miller, New York 1961, p.20.
25. *Id.*, "The Author's Account of Himself", in *op.cit.*, p.14.
26. *Ibidem*.
27. Cf. Nye, p.257.
28. Cf. Lasky, p.478.
29. J.Fenimore Cooper, *Notions of the Americans*, in K.S.House, pp.136-37.
30. Quoted in Nye, p.244.
31. *Ibidem*, p.242, n.18.
32. "The American Scholar", in House, p.69.
33. "The Poet", in House, pp.72-73.
34. "The American Scholar", in House, p.72.
35. J.K.Paulding, *The Backwoodsman*, in House, pp.124-25.
36. Cf. *Emerson, A Modern Anthology*, eds. A.Kazin and D.Aaron, New York 1958, p.230.
37. N.Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*, New York 1962, "Preface", p.22.
38. *Id.*, *The Marble Faun*, "Preface", p.vi.
39. *Ibidem*, p.71.
40. *Ibidem*, pp.219-20.
41. *Id.*, *The House of the Seven Gables*, Introd. by H.Levin, Columbus, Ohio 1969, Introduction, p.XV.

CHAPTER TWO

"Another sense...has informed my soul":
Washington Allston and Rome

Washington Allston is a unique figure in nineteenth-century American culture: admired both as a painter and writer, he was an inspiration and an example for the generation active in the 1830's, who shared Coleridge's estimate of him as a man "of high and rare genius... whether I contemplate him in the character of a Poet, a Painter, or a philosophic Analyst" (1). He established himself on both sides of the Atlantic as a painter of unquestionable talent—indeed, his countrymen considered him as the greatest artist as yet produced by America, an evaluation which modern criticism confirms (2); the last great man of the Renaissance, the "American Titian". Moreover, his poems were very favourably received and his Gothic romance *Monaldi* had some success and was later adapted for the stage (3); his *Lectures on Art* (published posthumously in 1850) has the distinction of being the first systematic American treatise on art, and contains much that is of interest.

Allston's influence was much greater upon American intellectual life outside his own profession. He made his impression both by the quality of his achievement and the quality of his life: to his countrymen, he appeared as the one American artist who could bridge the gulf between the Old World and the New by grafting the lesson of Europe and the past to strong American roots. To Emerson and many others, Allston was "the solitary link...between America and Italy" (4). An exploration of the significance of Italy for Allston's thought and art, in view of this emblematic quality of his figure to his contemporaries, seems therefore relevant to a better understanding of his oeuvre and of American Romantic art, as well of the paradox it is my intention to explore in this study.

Washington Allston was born in 1779 in South Carolina, where he early absorbed a love for "the wild and marvellous" (5), the mysterious and the tragic; in his youth he was a great reader of tales of banditti and supernatural beings while Gothic romances, especially Mrs Radcliffe's, were always among his favourite readings. He knew he wanted to be a painter even before he went to Harvard, and after graduating in 1800 he decided to go to Europe to learn his craft and study the Old Masters. Accordingly, he reached London in 1801 and attended the school of the Royal Academy for three years, while he also became acquainted with various painters, notably West and Fuseli, and patrons.

In 1804 he started for Italy by way of France, where he visited the Louvre

and saw Titian, Veronese and Tintoretto, and Switzerland. The Alps struck him with their grandeur and sublimity, and in the Lectures Allston described Mont Blanc, "that mighty pyramid of ice", as a supreme example of the sublime (6). The journey through the Alps was one of Allston's great experiences in Europe, which like his sojourn in Italy greatly influenced his perception of nature, and many years later he recalled a glorious sunrise he had seen at the Lago Maggiore as an unforgettable, deeply moving revelation:

... entranced, I saw the mountain kings,
The giant Alps, from their dark purple beds
Rise ere the sun, the while their crowned heads
Flashed with its one thousand heralds' golden wings (7).

On his way to Rome, Allston stopped for some time at Siena in order to learn a little Italian, and then he proceeded to the capital, probably by the more picturesque—if more dangerous—route of Radicofani, through imperious and lonely mountains where banditti were not infrequent: a "wild, barren country", where Allston will set a fateful night encounter in one of the most Gothic episodes of his *Monaldi* (8). He reached the city in November 1804, and spent there most of his four years in Italy, though he also visited Florence where he greatly admired Michelangelo's Medici tombs, and is thought to have painted "The Casket Scene"; on the evidence of a sonnet entitled "On Seeing the Picture of Aeolus by Pellegrino Tebaldi, in the Institute at Bologna", and of a descriptive passage in the romance (9), it would seem he also visited Bologna and the bay of Naples. His biographer, J.B. Flagg, reports that Allston also saw Venice, but there is no evidence to support his statement.

Rome fascinated Allston; the "shock of recognition" he experienced when exposed to the beauty and sublimity of its natural scenery, the splendour of antiquity and of Renaissance painting, may be described in the words he used to convey his first impression of the Apollo del Belvedere: "A sudden intellectual flash, filling the whole mind with light" (10). Here he discovered, or rather rediscovered what he had first explored in his imagination: a past at once legendary and authentic, the world of history, the dream of classical antiquity fostered by his study of the classics and most powerfully embodied in the vision of Rome which "at school and at college ... broods over the mind with a power which is never suspended or disputed" (11).

The city gave the young American an expanded sense of time; he became aware of the vital continuity between past and present as he contemplated, "with mute awe and reverence", the "objects of grandeur and

sublimity" that surrounded him everywhere in Rome.

The Forum and the Coliseum seemed to him to have found "a tongue in the elements, and [to have] become oracular to man's heart. ... speaking from without in the gorgeous language of the sun" (12). In the "delicious atmosphere only known to the South", where it is as if "the very ground and air were exulting in life" (13), the language of art and the language of Nature become one, as the great monuments of antiquity speak to the heart, revealing the invisible web of correspondences that underlies the universe:

There *is* a chain that runs through all things. How else should the mind hear the echo of its workings from voiceless rocks? Mysterious union! That our very lives should seem but so many reflections from the face of Nature; and all about us but visible types of the invisible man! (14).

Allston's first period in Rome and his reactions to the city and its art treasures have been described by Washington Irving, who spent some weeks with him there in the spring of 1805: he points out the young painter's sensitivity to beauty, his discriminating taste, his deep emotion and reverence before the rich and varied spectacle before his eyes. The well-studied works of the Old Masters, when seen in person, were inexpressibly thrilling and moving, and Allston was filled with reverent admiration for the "stupendous pile" of St Peter's and other sublime works by Michelangelo. Irving stresses the "sentiment of veneration" and the concentration displayed by his friend, as well as the "enthusiasm of an artist" constantly animating him as he pointed out the beauties of the Roman scene during their "delightful rambles" about the city and its environs (15). The calm beauty of the city and the Campagna, with their stillness, silence and timeless quality, their subtle colours and light effects gave Allston a sense of the past and the timeless, and sharpened his awareness of the symbolic potential of landscape.

Allston's life in Rome appealed so strongly to Irving, that he formed the short-lived project of joining him and becoming a painter himself: the young painter resided "among these delightful scenes, surrounded by masterpieces of art, by classic and historic monuments, by men of congenial minds and tastes, engaged like him in the study of the sublime and the beautiful" (16).

Allston had met other artists, both Italian and foreign, who gathered at the Caffé Greco and had welcomed the newcomer, and he had certainly profited from their stimulating company and talk. His most important encounter in Rome was however with a poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who was to become his lifelong friend and was, according to Allston himself, the most

powerful and decisive single influence on his intellectual development. Many years later, he told Dunlap: "To no other man whom I have known, do I owe so much intellectually, as to Mr Coleridge, with whom I became acquainted in Rome and who has honored me with his friendship for more than five and twenty years" (17).

Coleridge reached Rome on 31 December 1805 and quite early in 1806 he became acquainted with Allston: years later, he wrote "I am conscious I look with a stronger and more pleasurable emotion at Mr Allston's large landscape ["Diana with her Nymphs in the Chase", 1805 circa]... from its having been the occasion of my first acquaintance with him in Rome" (18). The encounter was not only, perhaps, the most important event in Allston's Italian sojourn, but also a memorable feature of Coleridge's journey through Italy (19). Allston attracted his interest, esteem and affection - the poet wrote to him that, had he not known the Wordsworths, "I should have loved and esteemed you *first* and *most*, and as it is, next to them I love and honour you" (20) - for his personal qualities, his keen, receptive mind, and his attitude to art, reflected in the mysterious, deeply suggestive character of his painting. Coleridge's notebook of the journey recorded analyses of the art of Rome and of paintings by Allston (21), who painted a portrait of the poet (unfinished owing to Coleridge's hurried departure) remarkable for its luminosity and vivid quality (22). Coleridge especially admired "Diana with her Nymphs in the Chase" with its magical atmosphere of mystery and wonder and its sublime elements: he saw it as an example of "exquisitely picturesque effects", analysed it at length in his notebook, and again praised the picture, "of which it is not too much to say-quam qui non amat, illum omnes et Musae et Veneres odere" (23), in a series of "Essays on the Fine Arts", published in a journal on the occasion of an exhibition held at Bristol by Allston in 1814.

Following their first meeting, the two young men explored the city and the Campagna together. Coleridge's company and conversation made every sight, every ruin and monument more exciting and alive: Allston later said that Rome could never be for him the "silent city", as Coleridge called it, while they were together, as "the fountain of his mind was never dry, and ... its living streams seemed specially to flow for every classic ruin over which we wandered" (24). The magic of Coleridge's extraordinary eloquence made the past live again for Allston: it became for him as real and relevant as the present, while he discovered not only the grandeur of antiquity, but its timeless dimension. This was one of Allston's most crucial imaginative experiences in Rome (25), where under Coleridge's genial and friendly guidance his notions of the potentialities of the imagination gradually expanded.

The long walks the two friends took in the Villa Borghese and the three weeks they spent at Olevano in the Sabine Hills, where Allston had rented a house, gave them an opportunity to contemplate and commune with Nature: in the enthusiastic description left by Coleridge of the magnificent mountain scenery at Olevano, which he examines minutely stressing all its picturesque and sublime elements, we may see a faithful record of the response, full of emotion, which the Italian scenery evoked in the two friends.

The other higher mountains ... were lit up with snow-relics, scarcely distinguishable from Sunshine on bare and moist rock opposed to deep Shade, save when (as often happened) both the one and the other were seen at the same time, when they formed one of the gentlest diversities possible, and yet the distinction evident and almost obvious. How exquisitely picturesque this effect is (in the strictest sense of the word) Mr Allston has proved in his Swiss Landscape, ... But how shall I describe the beauty of the road, winding up the different Hills, now lost & now reappearing in different arcs & segments of Circles-how call up before you those different masses of Smoke over the vale - I count 10 from this one point of view (for they are burning weeds) in different distances, now faint now vivid, now in shade & now their exquisite blue glittering in Sunshine. (26)

When recalling, years later, those unforgettable walks with Coleridge under the pines of Villa Borghese, Allston said he was tempted to dream he had once listened to Plato in the groves of the Academy (27). This is not only a tribute to the poet's well-known conversational powers, but also an indication as to the Nature of these talks, which certainly dealt, among other topics, also with metaphysics. The two friends contemplated and attempted to investigate "that unfathomable deep, the Human Soul", as Allston would say in his sonnet "On the Late Samuel Taylor Coleridge", adding that his friend's "Living Truths" will abide with him forever (28). Coleridge's metaphysical concerns, powerfully stimulated by his study of the German Idealists and especially of Kant and Schelling, led him to attempt the construction of a philosophical system of his own. He thus used Kantian terminology and ideas to his own purposes: Kant's reexamination of the creativity interchange between self and world was particularly important to him, as he aimed at constructing a dynamic philosophy of the mind that took account of man's creativity and moral freedom, his experience and existence as the creation of a personal God (29), while Schelling's views of Nature and Art had notable consequences also for his aesthetic theories. Coleridge's thought deeply impressed the young painter and coloured his vision of reality, while giving him sound philosophical bases and introducing him to Kant and Schelling.

whose influence may be clearly seen in Allston's writings. The poet moreover encouraged Allston to see his mission as an artist as the discovery and communication of the truths of the human soul, and lastly it is also to be remembered that when Allston joined the Episcopalian Church in 1815, he was following Coleridge's example.

Art, both ancient and modern, was of course a constant topic of conversation: with Allston, Coleridge undertook an exploration of pictorial aesthetics, recorded in his notebook, and it has been suggested that he derived some of his ideas on the subject of the aesthetics of painting from his young American friend (30). Coleridge was intent on revealing a world of landscape in poetry which he associated in his mind with the limitless horizons of some contemporary painters. Among these, true to his metaphysical insights, he chose as his counterpart in painting the "sublime" and pantheistic German Romantic artist, C.D. Friedrich. In view of Coleridge's association with Allston and his appreciation for his art, it is interesting to note that there are some important affinities between the two painters, whose technique expresses their perception of creation as a visionary activity: "Sight has become in-sight, a continual introspective enquiry into the mind's own powers and limitations" (31). Friedrich's dictum — "The painter should not just paint what he sees before him, but also what he sees within himself" (32) — is also Allston's: for both artists, it is the self that moulds the world of the senses, and indeed for Allston the "continous chain of creation" is but the reflection of the self, as he affirms in a passage of the *Lectures* strongly reminiscent of Kant, Fichte and Schelling, almost certainly mediated by Coleridge: "The Soul of Man is the conscious Reality, to which this stupendous circle [the chain of creation] is but the symbol" (33).

At the same time, for the German Romantics the artist is he who restores to the world its pristine purity and significance by "romanticising" it, that is by giving a "higher meaning to the everyday, a mysterious aspect to the ordinary, the dignity of the unfamiliar to the familiar, the appearance of infinity to the finite" (34). This reads like a description of Wordsworth's aims in the *Lyrical Ballads* as described by Coleridge, as well as of Allston's practice in his painting, especially in the various Italian landscapes and pictures like "Beatrice", "Rosalie" and "Moonlight Landscape", where the atmosphere of reverie projects the scene and the sitters into a timeless, magic dimension full of mysterious suggestiveness.

Allston, like his painter Monaldi in his Italian romance, "delighted to shut out the external world, to combine and give other life to the images it had left

in his memory". This description of the artistic process is very close to Coleridge's definition of the workings of the secondary imagination, which deliberately recombines the disparates of experience in order to create new forms of them (35). In a famous passage of the *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge describes the kind of poetry he wanted to create, dealing with characters "supernatural, or at least romantic, yet so to transfer from our inward nature to these shadows of the imagination a human interest and a semblance of truth" (36). Again, this is precisely what Allston's was aiming at when choosing his subjects from Mrs Radcliffe, Schiller, Spenser, Shakespeare, classical myth or the Bible.

Friedrich's use of the typical Romantic symbols such as moon, clouds, and mountains, as well as his luminosity and sense of magic wonder, of a release from time, all recur in Allston's painting, and in both artists Coleridge — who declared "I never regarded my senses as the criteria of my belief" (37) — could find a release from the "tyranny of the eye", that is from a literalness of vision that can only result in an unimaginative depiction of phenomenal reality lacking those suggestive overtones that express an awareness of a higher metaphysical reality beyond appearance. Coleridge praised Allston as the only contemporary artist to whom it seemed given to know that nature is not "the dead shapes, the outward *Letter* but the life of Nature revealing itself to the Phenomenon, or rather attempting to reveal itself" (38).

There can be no doubt that such knowledge had come to Allston mainly through the mediation of Coleridge during the weeks they spent together in Rome; though they met again in England nine years later, the poet's influence on him was stronger and more deeply felt in Allston's formative period. Coleridge initiated the young painter to German Idealist philosophy and to some crucial Romantic theories, while encouraging him to value spiritual and expressive aspects of art. Allston assimilated and made his own the philosophical ideas which he felt Coleridge had first made available to him and which, though most evident in the *Lectures on Art*, are an essential element of his artistic personality. His meditative, imaginative nature was well suited to absorb Idealistic interpretations of the world, of nature and of art, for — as he had come to realise while in Italy, he was "as one who could sleep to the real, and be awake only to a world of shadows" (39).

If an artist is fortunate enough to have been born in Italy, according to Allston, he need go nowhere else to realise his Idea, while many foreigners have sought in Italy — where even "the human form is of a finer mould" —

what they could not find in their own country (40). Rome was the "great University of Art", where the great masters of the past lived in their imperishable works everywhere to be seen and taught the "vernacular tongue of genius through all time": as Allston said many years later, the "glowing works of art" everywhere surrounding him in Rome had "breathed new life" into him (41), and to him Rome was always the place where he felt he had been born again to a new, spiritual life which would nourish both his heart and his mind. As he said of Claude Lorrain, whom he greatly admired, Allston's own intellectual and artistic education had been achieved in Rome mainly "by human sympathy, acting through human works, which gave birth to his intelled". Once his mind had thus been awakened, he could master "new forms of language" to express his new vision of the world and of Nature "in all her beauty, her majesty, her grandeur and sublimity" (42).

Allston painted fifteen pictures while in Italy, and often returned to Italian subjects once back in America, frequently referring to the drawings he had made in Rome. "Diana with her Nymphs in the Chase" and the first "Italian Landscape" (1805 circa) already show most of the elements with which Allston's imagination will always work: silence, light, wonder, mystery and loveliness. The quality of Italian light in all its subtle modulations — sunrise, midday, twilight, sunset, moonlight — impressed itself indelibly on Allston's imagination, which transmuted it into the rich yet delicate luminosity of his pictures. His light is always "luce di dentro", as he said of Titian's, it has that dreamlike quality of an inner experience magically transferred by the artist on his canvas, where it comes to life through the "poetry of colour", so characteristic of Allston's art, which he said he had learned from Titian. In his Italian landscapes Allston distils his memories of the beauty and serenity of the Italian natural scene and of the classical past, imaginatively rearranging and transforming reality-as-perceived to suggest a landscape of the mind and the artist's insight into the idea: referentiality is reduced to a dream, and the Roman Campagna is arrested in a timeless myth as Allston aims at achieving "the essences combined / Of Motion ceaseless, Unity complete" he had found in Raphael (43).

The Italian scenery was to Allston "never to be forgotten by a painter", and its intense, suggestive beauty was "not to be painted with words" (44): yet, in some poems and in *Monaldi* he did paint it in words as his memorable descriptions of the mountains at sunrise at the Lago Maggiore, of high noon and sunset in Rome, late afternoon at the bay of Naples or twilight in the mountains of Abruzzo (45) have the same evocative, visually realised power

of his landscapes. We find the same quiet intensity, skilful use of colours, of chiaroscuro and of harmony of lines and masses, and also on the page the artist's chief expressive medium is light. The stillness and silence of Rome with its nearly empty streets and squares under the glowing sun greatly impressed Allston, who recaptured this elusive quality on his canvas and in one of the most effective passages of description in his romance, a view of the Forum at high noon seen through a window that frames the scene as if it were a picture.

The air was hot and close, and there was a thin yellow haze over the distance like that which precedes the scirocco, but the nearer objects were clear and distinct, and so bright that the eye could hardly rest on them without quivering, especially on the modern buildings, with their huge sweep of whited walls, and their red tiled roofs, that lay burning in the sun, while the sharp, black shadows, which here and there seemed to indent the dazzling masses, might almost have been fancied the cinder-tracks of his fire. The streets of Rome, at no time very noisy, are for nothing more remarkable than ... for their noontide stillness. ... It was now high noon; ... not a vestige of life was to be seen, not a bird on the wing, and so deep was the stillness that a solitary foot-fall might have filled the whole air (46).

The centrality of the inner life, which finds in the picturesque beauty, the stillness and repose, the bright transparency of the light of Italy its "objective correlative" necessary for its manifestation (47), is one of the major themes of Allston's romance, which also clearly reflects his awareness that in Italy he had discovered how to transmute his experiences into art. Thus when he wrote *Monaldi* (1822), Allston's choice of the locale was not dictated by Gothic conventions or the current fashions for "italianate" novels; rather, his personal experiences in Italy as a young American artist in search of the past and self-identity, had convinced him that only Italy and Rome could be the appropriate setting for his parable, into which he projected so much of himself and of his ideas on the nature of art and on the mission of the artist in his own times. The romance is therefore crucial to an understanding of the role played in Italy in Allston's artistic and intellectual development, and should not be dismissed as "the writing of a gifted amateur", full of Italian souvenirs", of no value to us (48), since like some of the poems, especially those on artists and art works, it sheds light on a complex but remarkably consistent artistic personality.

Aside from the considerable interest *Monaldi* has for us as a projection of Allston's views and feelings about Nature and the past, of his insistent self-

questioning about the nature and function of art, and the significance of his Italian experience, in my opinion the romance as a work of fiction has more merit than is usually conceded, and compares very favourably with the large nineteenth-century output of American novels with an Italian setting examined by N. Wright (49). If *Monaldi* does not attain the thematic complexity, the subtlety of characterization and the symbolic density of Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*, unquestionably the best of this group, yet Allston's handling of certain themes, motifs and narrative techniques that will reappear in Hawthorne's romance is far from inept, and strongly encourages us to view *Monaldi* as a successful example of the kind of fiction that was to engage the writers of the "American Renaissance", especially from a thematic point of view. It must be furthermore pointed out, however, that the romance is not only interesting at a thematic level; the narrative structure, though obviously drawing on some Gothic patterns, is quite well organised and shows a certain degree of sophistication in the shifting of narrative points of view, in the control of the action that moves swiftly, though its psychological implications are fully developed, and in the characterization of the protagonists who constantly occupy the centre of the stage. One is in fact often reminded of drama, in which Allston had dabbled in London, while reading *Monaldi*, and not only because of the deliberate parallels with *Othello*, but also for the quality of the many dialogues, usually far more credible and natural than happens in most nineteenth-century American novels. As regards his characters, Allston is quite successful with his three men — Monaldi, Maldura and Fialto — and less so with his heroine, Rosalia Landi, who suffers, like endless fictional heroines of the century, from an excessive idealization. She retains, however, sufficient concreteness to save her from being the mere allegorical projection of stereotyped beauty, purity and virtue.

Allston's fable of art has the form of a dark tale of envy, betrayal, deceit and revenge. The young, gifted, noble-minded painter Monaldi is tricked by his friend Maldura, jealous of his success in art and personal life, into believing his virtuous wife betrays him with the villainous Fialto, Maldura's accomplice. Monaldi revenges himself by stabbing Rosalia and loses his reason, restored to him on his deathbed. While affording Allston an opportunity to indulge his taste for the mysterious and the tragic, this dramatic, Gothic plot is charged with symbolic reverberations that allow him to explore some of the themes that most deeply concerned him.

Monaldi, almost invariably dismissed as pastiche Gothic, an extravaganza full of "artists, bravos, convents, jealous husbands" (50), is certainly

written in the Gothic mode: the tone is set by the Introduction, which opens with the fearful adventure of an American traveller in the lonely mountains of Abruzzo at twilight. The whole episode is pure Mrs Radcliffe, whom Allston always greatly admired, and there are many more deliberate similarities between his romance and her work, such as the indirect presentation of the story, through the familiar device of the manuscript casually found by the narrator — found, moreover, in a convent; the atmosphere of suspense, fear and powerful emotion created in the Introduction and in some night scenes; the diabolical plot of Maldura and Fialto, who both have many traits of the Gothic villain; the virtuous heroine, yet another version of the "persecuted maiden"; and finally, Monaldi's ruin and madness. Allston's use of these Gothic motifs and devices is, however, part of his strategy to convey the deeper implications of his dramatic plot. Like Hawthorne, he is aware of the symbolic potential of such motifs and devices, which involve the reader at a deeper emotional and psychological level than other modes of narration which aim at "a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience" (51). Allston, like Hawthorne, rejects any form of documentary art, and exploits some Gothic devices to project his tale into an atmosphere remote from everyday reality: *Monaldi* is a "psychological romance" where some spiritual and metaphysical issues are explored through the mind and the inner experiences of an artist whose emblematic role is made clear from the start.

Though possessed of extraordinary genius, Monaldi is utterly devoid of pride or worldly ambition in his complete dedication to art: "I love my art for its own sake", he tells his ambitious, superficial friend Maldura, a failed poet. "Universally acknowledged to be the first painter in Italy", yet modest and unassuming (Allston was almost obsessive in his repeated denunciations of pride and ambition), Monaldi differs from his contemporaries "no less in kind than in degree. If he held anything in common with others, it was with those of ages past — with the mighty dead of the fifteenth century", from whom he has learned "the language of his art", while retaining a profound individuality of thought and expression. "His originality, therefore, was felt by all; and his country hailed him as one coming, in the spirit of Raffaello, to revive by his genius her ancient glory" (52). This passage is an explicit indication of the young painter's function in the romance: Monaldi not only is the type of the romantic artist in the modern world, but is also, clearly, a projection of Allston's own aspirations and views on art. Here as elsewhere, whenever describing Monaldi's artistic ideas and practice Allston is obviously speaking, through the thin fictional disguise, in his own voice, and in

making of him the acknowledged heir of Raphael, in touch with the living heritage of the past and yet profoundly original — hence, modern, he was defining both the role of the artist in modern times and his own role as he and his contemporaries in the United States saw it. As an American artist, Allston felt his mission was precisely to mediate, like his *Monaldi*, between the great masters of the Italian Renaissance, the rich heritage of the past which Europe and most of all Rome had made available to him, and the American present, as yet lacking a cultural identity of its own.

In the course of the romance, only two of *Monaldi's* pictures are described, both charged with a symbolic significance. The first is discovered by the anonymous American traveller, who appears in the "frame" of the tale, in a convent: it is an "extraordinary work", "gorgeous and terrible", recording "the visible struggle of a soul in the toils of sin" (53). We will learn later that it had been painted by *Monaldi*, as yet not named, towards the end of his short life, while insane. Even before we know anything of the protagonist's genius and early, "happy life", we are thus presented with a work born of the artist's vision in anguish and madness, which embodies not the "pure Idea" but the awful fascination of evil. Thus the painting, with its mysterious suggestiveness and the potency of its malignant beauty, prefigures both *Monaldi's* fate and one of the themes engaging Allston's attention, the dark side of art.

In the "manuscript" section of the romance, we are told that only one of *Monaldi's* pictures will be described, as "our business is rather with the man than the painter" (54): yet it is clear that the two are one, since an harmoniously integrated personality is an essential requisite in order to be a great artist, and when the pressure of events, as the plot unfolds, breaks this vital balance, disaster will swiftly ensue. The subject of *Monaldi's* first great picture is one "best suited to exhibit that rare union of intense feeling and lofty imagination" that characterises him; it also quite accurately reflects Allston's own interests and taste. Indeed, the fictional "First Sacrifice of Noah after the Subsiding of the Waters" could well figure in a catalogue of Allston's own painting: moreover its grandeur and power of form and expression, and most importantly its "infusion of human emotion in the surrounding elements", are what Allston aimed at achieving in his great historical pictures, most of all in his unfinished masterpiece "*Belshazzar's Feast*". When writing *Monaldi*, of course, Allston was still hoping to finish the picture; as is well known, his failure to do so, in spite of his dogged, painful efforts till his death, was both a personal tragedy and a source of endless speculations by contemporaries and later critics (55). *Monaldi's* unqualified success with this picture is then

yet another projection of Allston's artistic aspirations, while his views are further slated through the *persona* of Cavalier S-, "a philosopher and a poet" who systematically analyses the painting and voices some of Allston's ideas as to the requisites of a truly great picture, adding that "one essential" is to imbue the natural world with personal emotion.

This is the poetry of the art; the highest nature. There are hours when nature may be said to hold intercourse with man, modifying his thoughts and feelings; when man acts, and in his turn bends her to his will, whether by words or colours, he becomes a poet. (56)

Art, that is, is created when man has been granted a vision of "Nature's subtle mystery", that "pure Idea" which lies beyond phenomenal appearance, and he has the power of assimilating "what is foreign, or external, to our own particular nature" (57) by impressing his own unique, individual personality on the data supplied by the senses. These he selects and rearranges according to his personal, inner vision, thus achieving not mimetic fidelity to what he has seen, but "Human or poetic Truth", which exists exclusively in and for the mind, and is distinguished from the truth of things in the natural or external world (58).

Ordinary man, trapped in the Actual, for whom as with *Maldura* "the world, palpable, visible, audible [is] his idol" and who lives "only in externals" (59), sees "only with his eyes", relying, that is, entirely on his sense perceptions. To him, then, such imaginative recreations of a deeper spiritual reality as *Monaldi's* picture will appear "unnatural" (60), as he will not find in it a "faithful transcript" of nature-as-perceived: but the great artist, like Michelangelo (whose "wondrous power" is eloquently praised in the romance, as in other writings), gives birth "to forms unseen by man, unknown to Earth" which through his mediation, as he brings to view the "invisible Idea", acquire more than ordinary reality and life (61).

As often stated in the sonnets on artists, and clearly though indirectly affirmed in the romance, for Allston great works of art such as Raphael's and Michelangelo's, "visible signs of the pure Idea" achieving by their sublimity the status of works of Nature, make available to those who contemplate them with the necessary reverence, the same epiphany experienced by the artists themselves, an intuitive, emotionally charged insight into the Noumenon, the spiritual reality that animates the universe and that, being itself the life-giving principle, alone can give man the god-like power to create. Thus the cognitive powers of art are in this sense superior to any other form of knowledge: the

artist is he who deciphers the secret hieroglyphic language of Nature and rediscovers the original meaning of the world through what Novalis called "magischer Idealismus".

Presented in the first chapters as not only the true heir, but even as a sort of reincarnation of Raphael—for Allston the supreme example of a great artist whose mind was "an ever-flowing fountain of sympathies" and who therefore was a "prophetic revealer of the unseen True ... [that] can only be evoked by a kindred love as pure as itself" (61)—Monaldi, once his "pure simplicity of heart" is gone through exposure to evil, can no longer be an artist, and indeed has lost all interest in his art. He can no longer look at Nature "with the eye of a lover", and while unresponsively gazing on a gorgeous sunset at Ponte Molle in Rome, "never to be forgotten by a painter", but now meaningless to him, he mourns: "No, Ihou art nothing to me now, thou glorious sun". Nature no longer affords him a glimpse of the "invisible Idea", from which alone art can spring, but only reflects his disordered mind: "The black river ... and its imageless waters appeared to him but the invisible current of his dark thoughts". Monaldi's contact with evil results in the distortion and thwarting of his emotional and imaginative life, in loneliness and despair, in spiritual death: "Morally, Monaldi's heart was dead" (62).

The young painter's life before his loss of innocence is described "like one of fresher ages; like the first stream that wandered through Eden, sweet and pure in itself, and bearing on its bosom the bright and lovely images of a thousand flowers" (63), and the plot of Allston's romance may be seen to acquire a mythical dimension through oblique references to the Fall of the Man, ever-present to the New England Puritan mind that played such a crucial role in shaping the national consciousness and the imagination of American artists of the nineteenth century. Edenic imagery was readily associated by American writers and artists with Italy, and the natural Italian scene appeared to Allston as "the type and register of what man was / Before sin Ithralled him" (64), while the Arcadian, Edenic quality of the natural scenery in Rome and in the Campagna with its quiet beauty and timeless pastoral simplicities, so memorably recaptured in Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*, will be a constant element in the pictures where Allston imaginatively recreated his Italian experience.

Several critics have justly pointed out some parallels between Allston and Hawthorne, stressing their sense of mystery and the tragic, their dreamlike moods, and the centrality the inner life has in their art (65). Some further

points in common between them have already been indicated, such as their creative use of the Gothic motifs, their Edenic imagery and their vision of Italy as the land where past and present coexist and where art as they conceived it could flourish: one last aspect, however, deserves attention. In their Romantic views of the nature and the functions of art, inevitably at odds with their Calvinistic heritage, there are polarities and tensions typical of the American imagination resulting from the struggle "to close the split in American experience, to discover a unity that—for the artist especially—"was not there" (66). Among the various causes of this conflict listed by M. Bewley, such as an opposition between Europe and America, we may include the tension between the Romantic conception of the artist, seer and prophet, gifted like Allston's Michelangelo with god-like powers (67), and the Calvinistic deep-rooted distrust of the imagination and of the artist, who holds converse with unseen powers and possesses a mysterious, dangerous knowledge.

Neither Allston nor Hawthorne felt completely at ease with the familiar Romantic view of the artist as a sort of secular priest, which was instead readily accepted by Transcendentalism, though both were convinced that the artist's visionary activity creates myths truer than phenomenal reality, as his "potent art" pierces the veil of appearance. Yet Hawthorne's attitude to this "awful gift" is ambiguous, as to him as to Allston the artist is not only a seer, but also a magician, and in this connection magic does not have the positive connotations it had for the German Romantics, especially Novalis (to whom, however, Allston seems at times quite close): for Hawthorne, the magic of art is almost always black magic. He projected his own doubts and fears as to the true import of his "gift" into several fictional doubles, most explicitly in "The Prophetic Pictures" where a nameless painter/magician glories in his god-like power: his insight into Nature and human nature, however, can be dangerous, and he can unwittingly drive others (and himself) to destruction through his dark knowledge (68). This sinister side of art was ever present to Hawthorne's mind, and in my opinion the same fears may be clearly discerned in Allston's lifelong reflection on art, most explicitly embodied in Monaldi and his fate.

Allston projects into his fictional double not only his aspirations (to be the true heir of the Renaissance masters), but also his fears (as to the ambiguous nature of the artist's "gift of intercourse with worlds unknown" [69]). To Allston, the artist is "a privileged seer of Nature", who however treads "very near the dizzy brink of the Impossible", and in art we may find

"a charm ... how mingled with good and ill!" (70). The "superhuman countenance" revealed by the artist on his canvas—as happens with Monaldi's painting—may communicate a message of horror and despair: it may "radiate falsehood", and its aesthetic appeal may derive from the "appalling beauty of the King of Hell" (71). Finally, artists that concentrate too exclusively on the imagination and the inner life, like "rapt" Correggio, visionary Rembrandt, and Monaldi himself, may be easily driven to madness (72). The creation of art is therefore fraught with perils, both moral and psychological: the unbounded powers of the imagination, the visionary quality of artistic creation, the very self-concentration so necessary for an artist, all have to Allston potentially dangerous connotations. The imagination is a god-like faculty, but also a possible source of terror and estrangement from society and the natural world.

D. Hunter has rightly pointed out that in his theoretical writings Allston was determined to fix the imagination into "a context of permanent, uniform and public truths" (73): the same conservative attitude is already evident in the earlier *Monaldi*, both in the object lesson of the young artist's fate and in the explicit authorial comments about the value of religion as a constraint for the imagination. On the other hand, if it is only in the Bible, "the only true philosophy, the sole fountain of light" that "the dark questioning of the understanding ... at once lose their darkness and their terror" (74), yet in the *Lectures* we find the Idealist view of art as a revelation of the Absolute in the finite: the "dark questioning of the understanding", the self-questioning of the American artist must go on.

The meaning and value of Allston's experience in Italy for his mind and art are most explicitly expressed, perhaps, in the poem "To the Author of 'the Diary of an Ennuyée'" (circa 1826). Once more, and more directly than in other writings, Allston makes it clear in the poem that the years spent in Italy in his youth were the turning point of his life, as well as the constant source of inspiration and intellectual nourishment; the poem reads also as a condensed statement of his main beliefs and ideas. All the major themes and moods of Allston's art and reflection are present: Italy, Nature, art, reverie, youth as the happiest, because the most receptive, intuitive and imaginative period of life, and the restorative, indispensable use of memory, a central theme to the poem. It is through memory that in "this world of strife" we may recover the life-giving experiences which seem available only "to the first deep consciousness of life": Allston, like Wordsworth, would "enshrine the spirit of the past / For future restoration" (75), and he seems very close to the

poet (whom he had met in England) as regards the relationship between man and Nature, the unique value of youthful impressions and experiences, and the crucial function of memory.

Wordsworth's "spots of time", epiphanic moments of intensified perception located in childhood and youth, are one of the key elements of his poetic vision. Two such visionary experiences are minutely described in *The Prelude* where they are seen as central to the growth of the poet's mind: a vision of the eternal Mind constantly at work in the universe, granted to him on Snowdon, gave Wordsworth a feeling of new life, of active exploration of a new-found world. What the Lake District and the English countryside were to Wordsworth, Italy and its "vision clime" was to Allston. Here he was granted his vision on the Lago Maggiore and felt his mind could communicate with the eternal Mind through new kinds of sense perceptions. He often felt that in Italy "another sense, from heaven descended, ... had informed his soul", whether through contemplation of the natural scene or of the great masterpieces of the Renaissance (76): he could thus decipher the signs, inscribed in the natural world, of an eternal Mind continuously creating the universe it pervades and animates.

Allston's Monaldi—the Wordsworthian, Romantic artist—regards nothing "in the moral or physical world as tiresome or insignificant; every object had a charm, and its harmony and beauty, its expression and character, all passed into his soul in all its varieties, while his quickening spirit, brooded over them as over the elementary forms of a creation of his own" (77). This, while recalling a famous passage in *The Prelude* (iii, 124-128), is clearly a description of Allston's attitude to nature, especially in Italy, where "there is voice in nature ever audible to the heart" (78), and Italy becomes for him identified with nature itself, to be lovingly contemplated, noting its minutest beauties that stir "a sensitive heart and a romantic imagination" to be treasured up in memory, as "themes of delightful musing in her absence" (79). Memories of the natural scene he had observed in Italy during his youth came back to him in his later years after his final return to America, "with the never-failing freshness and life which love can best give to the absent" (80): concentrating on his inner life, for Allston the artist relives past experiences and emotions, and in Wordsworth's words "Even as an agent for the one great mind, / Creates, creator and receiver both" (ii, 272-3). He mediates between the seen and unseen worlds, giving visible shape to what would otherwise be inexpressible, that "stranger feeling, far remote from earth, / That still through earthly things awaits its birth" (81). This "stranger feeling"

is "the pre-existing idea, in its living power", that needs for its manifestation its "objective correlative" in the external world (82): the artist seeks it among his memories of what he has observed in nature, delighting to combine and give another life to the images it has left in memory (83).

The supreme creative power of the artist is embodied for Allston in Raphael and Michelangelo, "in whose highest efforts we have ... certain revelations of Nature", such as have been vouchsafed only to "her privileged seers"; they are "the two great sovereigns of the distinct empires of Truth—the Actual and the imaginary" (84). Michelangelo, seen as the type of the imaginative romantic artist, is described as rarely dealing with familiar objects; and "when he did deal with them, it was rather as *things past*, as they appear to us through the atmosphere of the *hallowing memory*" (85). We may say then, that for Allston the essence of artistic creation is Wordsworth's "emotion recollected in tranquillity". In Rome Allston had become aware that the present can only be understood in terms of the past, and memory was the great source and theme of his work, as he was convinced that the germs of our best ideas are to be found in our past, in the insights, "pure affections", experiences and dreams ("In Rome ... were some of my happiest dreams") of youth. He wrote, "I seldom step into the ideal world but I find myself going back to the age of first impressions", when the mind creates for itself "a permanent beach", a barrier against the "ocean of time": upon this beach the poetry of my life may be said to have its birth, where the real end and the ideal begins". This "beach", Hawthorne's "neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairy-land" (86), is where art as Allston and Hawthorne conceived it can live and be fully realized, in a delicate balance between the Actual and the Imaginary, achieved through the mediation of memory. Allston's "neutral territory" became identified for him with "bright, peerless Italy", forever present to his mind with the same freshness of his first, youthful impressions (87). "The visions of the past ... do not vanish"; they are accessible to him even from his "present foreground, matter of fact as it is: ... I have only, as it reversing a telescope, to look back into the past, to see the same delightful though imaginary distance ... still the same" (88). The visions of Italy, a visionary past contrasted with the matter-of-fact American present, are to Allston an unchanging source of artistic creativity; after more than thirty years, he still lived upon them in memory, as he said of the art works in Rome (89). Thus we say that Allston's memories of Italy function

precisely like Wordsworth's "spots of time", which retain

A vivifying Virtue, whence, depress'd
In trivial occupations, and the round
of ordinary intercourse, our minds
are nourished and invisibly repaired.

(xi, 258-65).

The poetry of absence, of memory is the great theme of Allston's whole oeuvre, a sort of Proustian *Recherche du Temps Perdu*: what he had seen and experienced in Italy, where he had also learned to see himself as part of a historical continuum beginning with the great masters of the Renaissance (90), stylized through sentiment, reflection and a process of displacement in time, is central to his artistic vision and his art. London had given him the basic skills he needed, but Italy taught him "the language of art" and what he wished to say (91). With her "gorgeous skies", her "lines of harmony, [and] nameless hues", her "prophecy / of lost, regained, primeval harmony" (92), her art treasures Italy was throughout Allston's life a potent symbol for a cluster of experiences, emotions and ideas of the utmost significance for his art. Natural beauty and sublimity, the insight into the spiritual core of reality, the awareness of a living universe where material and spiritual elements intertuse, and of a "world within"; the uses of the past, the living splendour of a rich artistic tradition—all this, and more, is the meaning of Italy to Allston. The memory of Italy was part of his way of seeing and thinking, of painting and writing, of his identity as an American Romantic artist.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1. E. L. Griggs, ed., *Unpublished Letters of S.T. Coleridge*, 2 vols. New Haven 1933, II, 305-6.
2. Cf., e. g., E.P. Richardson, *W. Allston. A Study of the Romantic Artist in America*, Chicago 1948, p. 174.
3. Cf. Percy Mackaye, *Epoch*, 2 vols. New York 1927, I, 166, 168-75.
4. R. L. Ruske, ed., *Letters of R.W. Emerson*, 6 vols, New York 1939, III, 182.
5. W. Dunlap, *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States*, 1834, 2 vols., Boston 1918, II, 153.
6. W. Allston, *Lectures on Art*, 1850, in *Lectures on Art and Poems, and Monaldi*, ed. N. Wright, Gainesville, Fla 1967, pp. 58-59..
7. "To the Author of 'The Diary of an Ennuyée' " in *Lectures... and Poems*, iii, p. 378.
8. *Monaldi*, in *Lectures...*, pp. 102-120. Written in 1822, *Monaldi* was published only in 1841.
9. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 210-11.
10. *Lectures*, p. 100.
11. G. S. Hillard, *Six Months in Italy*, Boston 1854, p. 560.
12. *Monaldi*, p. 65.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 211.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
15. Cf. W. Irving, "W. Allston", in *Spanish Papers, Biographies and Miscellanies*, 2 vols. New York 1866, II, 243-50, *passim*.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
17. Dunlap, p. 187.
18. Quoted by Richardson, p. 74, n 9.
19. Cf. A. Grant, *A Preface to Coleridge*, London 1972 , p. 177.
20. Quoted in Richardson, p. 75.

21. Cf. Grant, p. 179.
22. Cf. Richardson, p. 78. Ten years later, while in England, Allston painted another portrait of the poet, now in the National Portrait Gallery, London.
23. Quoted In Grant, p. 177.
24. Dunlap, p. 187.
25. Cf. Richardson, p. 83.
26. Quoted in Grant, pp.177-79.
27. Cf. Dunlap, p. 187.
28. "On the Late S. T. Coleridge", in *Lectures* p. 346.
29. Cf. Grant, p. 88.
30. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 179.
31. B. J. Wolf, *Romantic Re-vision*, Chicago and London 1982, p. 23.
32. Quoted in G. T. Hughes, *Romantic German Literature*, London 1979, p. 114.
33. *Lectures*, p. 69.
34. Novalis, quoted in Hughes, p. 66.
35. Cf. S. T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. G. Watson, London 1967, p. 167.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 168-9.
37. Quoted in Grant, p. 72.
38. Griggs, II, 152.
39. *Monaldi*, p. 23.
40. Cf. *Lectures*, p. 31.
41. *Lectures*, p. 158; J. B. Flagg, *W. Allston, Life and Letters*, New York 1882, p. 319.
42. *Lectures*, pp. 157, 158.
43. Cf. "Sonnet on the Group of the Three Angels before the Tent of Abraham, by Raffaello, in the Vatican", in *Lectures*, p. 274.
44. *Monaldi*, p. 139.

45. Cf. "To the Author...", iii, p. 378; *Monaldi*, pp. 64-5, 138-9, 208-9, 7.
46. *Monaldi*, p. 64.
47. Cf. *Lectures*, p. 16. Unlike T. S. Eliot, for whom the "objective correlative" is a literary device at the disposal of the artist, Allston—the first to use it—sees it as a metaphysical expression of a prior harmony between mind and word. Cf. Wolf, pp. 249-50, n 2.
48. Richardson, pp. 172, 173; V. Wyck Brooks, *The Flowering of New England* (1937), New York 1952, p. 171. A. Mariani, on the other hand, rightly shows more appreciation for Allston's romance: cf. *Scrittura e figurazione nell'Ottocento americano*, Napoli 1984, p. 19, while Wolf's interpretation is not wholly convincing (cf. pp. 5-7, 68).
49. Cf. N. Wright, *American Novelists in Italy*, Philadelphia 1965, ch. 1 and 2.
50. V. Wyck Brooks, p. 171.
51. N. Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables*, ed. H. Levin, Columbus, Ohio 1969, Preface, p. 1.
52. *Monaldi*, p. 25.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
55. Richardson is surely right when he rejects the familiar interpretation of Allston's failure as a sign of the impossibility of being an artist in America, as Story, James and others maintained, since most of Allston's best work, though nourished by his European experience, was done after his return to America (cf. pp. 23, 123, 128).
56. *Monaldi*, p. 29.
57. *Lectures*, p. 79.
58. *Ibid.*, pp. 75-6.
59. *Monaldi*, p. 19.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 29, cf. the sonnet "Art", in *Lectures*, p. 227.
61. *Lectures*, pp. 140, 34.
62. *Monaldi*, pp. 139-40, 176.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 177.

64. "To the Author...", viii, p. 377.
65. Cf. e.g., Richardson, pp. 136-7; B. Novak, *American Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, New York 1972, pp. 44-5; J. S. Kasson, *Artistic Voyagers*, Westport and London 1982, p. 76.
66. M. Bewley, quoted in R. Chase, *The American Novel and its Tradition*, Garden City, N. Y. 1957, p. 6.
67. Cf. especially the sonnets "Art" and "On Michelangelo".
68. Cf. N. Hawthorne, "The Prophetic Pictures", (1837), in *Hawthorne's Short Stories*, ed. N. Arwin, New York 1946, p. 70.
69. Sonnet "On Seeing the Picture of Aeolus by P. Tibaldi...", in *Lectures*, p. 275.
70. Sonnet "On the Luxembourg Gallery", in *ibid.*, p. 277.
71. Cf. *Monaldi*, p. 15.
72. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 30.
73. D. Hunter, "American's First Romanics: R. H. Dana, Sr and W. Allston", *New England Quarterly* 45, March 1972, 26.
74. *Aphorisms*, in *Lectures*, p. 177.
75. "To the Author...", ii, p. 378; W. Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, Introd. by C. Baker, New York 1966, xi, 342-3.
76. Cf. "To the Author...", v, p. 378, and "On the Group... by Raffaele", p. 274.
77. *Monaldi*, pp. 23-4.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
79. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-5.
80. *Ibid.*
81. "To the Author...", vii, p. 379.
82. *Lectures*, p. 16.
83. Cf. *Monaldi*, p. 23.
84. *Lectures*, p. 138.

85. *Lectures*, p. 139. Italics mine.

86. Dunlap, II, 158; N. Hawthorne, "The Customs House", in *Great Short Works of Hawthorne*, ed. F. C. Crews, New York 1967, p. 33.

87. "To the Author...", iv, p. 378; cf. also ii and iii.

88. Flagg, p. 320.

89. Cf. *Ibid.*

90. Cf. Kasson, p. 47.

91. Cf. Richardson, p. 150.

92. "To the Author...", iv, viii, pp. 378, 379.

CHAPTER THREE

"Between two Countries": Hawthorne and *The Marble Faun*

The Marble Faun, Nathaniel Hawthorne's last completed romance (1), like the rest of his work has been exhaustively analyzed and discussed by legions of critics, who have in general concluded that it fails for a variety of reasons. According to Hyatt Waggoner, to select one of the most distinguished Hawthornian scholars, *The Marble Faun* is unsuccessful because in it Hawthorne "failed with Rome [where the romance is set] and failed with Hilda"(2). The latter, a fair Protestant maiden from New England who is one of the main characters in the romance, has rarely found much favour with modern readers and critics, who almost unanimously, though the intensity of their dislike for this pre-Jamesian "Innocent abroad"(3) varies, agree that she can only be found "ridiculous, or if we take her seriously, self-righteous and uncharitable" (4). These critics further argue that on the contrary Hawthorne meant her to appear not only attractive and likeable, but also, and more importantly, a moral touchstone of unquestionable value.

Now, if Hawthorne has failed with her, if "even he stumbled in sentimentally idealizing Hilda" (5) and was actually incapable of realizing that she was in fact "giving an *unintended* [on Hawthorne's part] impression of self-righteousness and priggishness", of "unsufferable superiority" (6); then the case against *The Marble Faun* begins to appear quite well-grounded, though Waggoner, on his part, qualifies his negative comments by adding that the romance is, however, "a rewarding failure. For on the thematic level it is, for the most part, such *good* Hawthorne" (7). Roy H. Pearce and, more recently, Marga Cottino Jones (8) go much further and are much more radical in their adverse criticism of the romance: they see it as evidence of Hawthorne's waning grasp on his material, and of his increasing incapacity not only to control his characterization and to embody his themes in a significant symbolic structure, but even, as Mrs Cottino Jones concludes, to realize the weakness of Hilda's character and of the romance in general.

To put it briefly, then, most of the critics who have examined *The Marble Faun* find it, on the whole, a failure on account of what they see as the collapse of Hawthorne's former powers to create and control a coherent whole, and of the characterization of Hilda (to whom the author evidently

attached great significance since he invested her with a symbolic role no reader can miss, though he may misinterpret it). Some scholars also stress that, seemingly, Hawthorne was even incapable of realizing how signally he had tailed with *The Marble Faun*.

In fact, as is well known, Hawthorne greatly valued the romance, and while his acute self-criticism had made him recall and destroy all the available copies of *Fanshawe* in 1828, and would later make him recognize that the last four romances, to which he worked the last five years of his life (1859-1864) were so bad that he left them unfinished (10), he seems to have considered *The Marble Faun* an achievement worthy of the great care and labour he had put into its design and execution, and once called it his "best work". Of course, the artist is by no means always the best judge of his own work, and it is therefore legitimate for readers and critics to disregard such indications as may be derived from the author's satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with his completed, published work when evaluating it. Nor should much importance, if any, be attached to the way the work itself was received by the public (in our case, with great favour). Still, some negative critics, notably Roy H. Pearce and Mrs Cottino Jones, present us with a Hawthorne so strikingly different from his usual artistic self, wandering, lost, in the "twilight of romance" (11), no longer able, in *The Marble Faun*, to integrate convention, narrative and theme (12), and worse, "simply unable to realize" his failure (13), that Hawthorne's aims and achievement in this romance deserve, in my opinion, further, careful consideration, in order to verify such drastic judgments.

As regards "the art of narration", as Henry James calls the handling of the plot in *The Marble Faun*, he was quite right in finding it "more at fault than in the author's other novels" (14): it is undeniable that the plot verges sometimes on incoherence due to its intricancies, and does not seem so firmly textured and controlled as in, say, *The Scarlet Letter*. The action, particularly slow to get started in the first twelve chapters or so, is often retarded by long, at times seemingly unnecessary digressions and by the many "descriptions of various Italian objects, antique, pictorial, and statuesque" (15) mostly lifted from Hawthorne's *Italian Notebooks*. The romance is in consequence enormously long when compared with Hawthorne's other works, though of normal length by nineteenth-century standards.

One of the main objections to *Marble Faun*, is Hawthorne's "failure with Rome" and with Italy in general, that is, his decision to incorporate so many

descriptions of the art objects, churches, and other buildings he had seen in Rome and elsewhere into the fabric of the romance. Marga Cottino Jones, for instance, finds — in agreement with another critic, John Huzzard, whom she cites — that these passages (admittedly numerous) remain "merely journalistic descriptions heavily hindering the fictional structure", since their "unassimilated presence" is an element of disturbance and "often of disintegration of the fictional unity" of the story (16). Her assertion seems to find an unwitting confirmation in Hawthorne's own words in the Preface, where he says he was unwilling to cut down the minute descriptions of Italian sights for what appear to be merely sentimental reasons: "... I could not find it in my heart to cancel them" (17).

According to Mrs Cottino Jones (and others), Hawthorne had been duly — if at first reluctantly, as some impatient remarks in the *Italian Notebooks* show — impressed with the usual sights of Rome, like any respectable American tourist conscientiously "doing" Europe, urged by an almost pathetic eagerness to "improve" himself; then, while composing *The Marble Faun*, he simply could not bring himself to making the painful decision of wasting all his "pictures from Italy". So, the argument runs, he just lavishly and indiscriminately crammed his story with description after description, utterly oblivious of the structural requirements of a well-made romance, perversely bent on writing his own version of the Baedeker guide-book.

One is tempted to say that all this makes one think rather of those dreadful bores who, upon returning from abroad, inflict on their defenceless friends and acquaintances an unconscionable number of slides and pictures of foreign places and sights; not of a conscious artist like Hawthorne. But of course, as critics like Mrs Cottino Jones and Roy H. Pearce remind us, by the time he wrote the romance, Hawthorne no longer knew exactly what he was doing: his dotage, we are made to understand, had somewhat precociously started in, and as an artist he was finished. A conscious artistic device Hawthorne deliberately (nothing in his work is left to chance) employed precisely to achieve that "structured complexity" — this time on a much grander scale than he had ever attempted before — of which these critics lament the disintegration, is thus presented as an unmistakable sign of clumsy technique and of incapacity to control the narrative medium, as his sense of proportion was by now, we are told, hopelessly at fault.

In my opinion, the problem should be approached from a different angle, in order to assess whether intention and achievement, in *The Marble Faun*,

diverge as widely as some critics maintain. In this connection, Hawthorne's brief notations on the figurative arts, as he jotted them down in the *Italian Notebooks*, are of paramount importance to clarify the nature of romance as he understood it, as well as his experimentation with a narrative technique capable of capturing those impalpable nuances, those "glimpses of beings and objects grander and more beautiful" than can anywhere be found in the world of "actualities" (that is, in terms of narrative art, the world of the novel), which are the materials he builds his "poetic or fairy precinct" with (18). In the entry for February 23rd, 1858 (written in Rome while composing the first draft of *The Marble Faun*), we read that every work of the figurative arts, "like all works of the highest excellence, *suggests far more than it shows*"; it is, as he says elsewhere, "a great symbol" which "if it means one thing, ... seems to mean a thousand and often opposite things" (19). In objecting to Hawthorne's technique in *The Marble Faun*, R.H. Pearce — echoing James's concluding remark on the "almost fatal vagueness" of the finale (20) — states that Hawthorne's failure in this romance is hardly to be marvelled at, since this work is only the last, most convincing proof that, as happens in the sketches, " ...always Hawthorne found it easy to feel instead of to think, to see vaguely instead of clearly, to *suggest rather than to say*, to emotionalize rather than to moralize the natural world" (21).

This seems to me, in the first place, an inaccurate view of the sketches, which in general fail because allegory, that is an intellectual equation of character, action, or object, and moral significance, replaces the emotionally richer symbolism of the best tales and romances. In the second place, it hardly seems acceptable to consider *The Marble Faun* a complete fiasco just because, as the critic seems to lament elsewhere, it is not *The Scarlet Letter*. No one, of course, will deny that *The Marble Faun* is inferior to *The Scarlet Letter*; it seems strange, however, to single out Hawthorne's suggestiveness as one of his most fatal weaknesses. Most readers and critics, in fact, are agreed that he achieves his best work when he suggests his perception of reality and of its significance, his insight into psychological and moral complexities through the creation of emotionally charged symbols and what has been called "the strategy of indirection". Hawthorne was convinced that objective reality is ultimately explicable, if at all, only in terms of its subjective effects, and that these effects are often paradoxical and never clear.

Indeed, it must be pointed out that *The Marble Faun* in particular, and other Hawthornian works in general, often gain their clarity at the expense

of their poetry (23): that is, we should add, precisely when Hawthorne "says" rather than "suggests" (to use Pearce's terms), when he explains the meaning of a symbol instead of leaving it to be inferred, or when he is at pains to point out the "thoughtful moral" in comments — in *The Marble Faun*, either authorial or spoken (usually) by Kenyon, one of the two main male characters — which are aesthetically damaging. Hawthorne is at his best when he consistently follows his theory of the romance, when he "raises issues and presents alternative solutions, but offers few judgments" (24) and few explanations. Hawthorne fails when his myths become sermons, and he proceeds to "moralize the natural world" (as Pearce obviously prefers him to do) by finding, in Hilda's words, that "There are sermons in stones ... and especially in the stones of Rome" (25).

The danger of falling into didacticism lurks in the Wordsworthian echo of these words, especially if we consider that, as Oscar Wilde wittily but shrewdly observed, Wordsworth often "found in stones the sermons he had already hidden there" (26); that is to say, when the object is only seen and presented as the vehicle of a "thoughtful moral", without any imaginative overtones, then it becomes lifeless, as it is "moralized" by a rational, not emotional, impulse. Hawthorne, then, fails precisely when his anxiety to make more explicit the moral issues he is so deeply concerned with, causes him to abandon that suggestive and ambiguous presentation of his truths as something to be glimpsed at, not fully revealed or comprehended, that is one of the essential elements of his modernity.

Once more, in *The Marble Faun*, Hawthorne was able — despite occasional lapses into literalness and didacticism (all too few, it would seem, to "save" the romance in R.H. Pearce's eyes) — to convey his sense of the mystery encompassing man's existence and of the inadequacy of abstract reasoning to penetrate it. In the romance, therefore, to Henry James's regret, there are no final statements to be either accepted or rejected as representing the view to be taken of the four main characters. Kenyon's words to Hilda, towards the end, may well be taken as if spoken by the author to the reader: in reply to Hilda's "I do not accept your moral", Kenyon says: "Then here is another: take your choice!" (27). Still more significant are Donatello's words to Kenyon as the two friends disagree about the expression of a religious figure they are observing in a church: "Each must interpret for himself!" (28), since they clearly reflect Hawthorne's attitude to the figurative arts, and by analogy to his own.

Though much has been written about the importance—or the irrelevance, according to the viewpoint of the critic—of art and art objects in *The Marble Faun* (29), this aspect deserves further examination, although only as far as it is relevant to the point in question, that is Hawthorne's narrative technique and structural design in this romance.

In his *Notebooks* and *Journals*, as well as in many significant passages of *The Marble Faun*, Hawthorne remarks that sketches and unfinished works of art are preferable to the finished works, as they hold the power of immediate, instantaneous creation, not overlaid and often obscured by further elaboration: we may say that to him they are open-ended works, allowing the spectator to participate and collaborate with the artist, in a vital and fruitful exchange: "It is the spectator's mood that transfigures the Transfiguration [Raphael celebrated painting] itself", while in a passage of the *Italian Notebooks* we find: "... as regards the interpretation... of ...any profound pictures there are likely to be as many interpretations as there as spectators" (30).

This clearly shows, once more, how Hawthorne's poetics—never explicitly theorized in a systematic way, but nevertheless extremely organic and articulated—while stemming in a direct line from pre-romantic (the Gothic novel) and Romantic art theory and practice, yet looks forward to the aesthetics of our own century. As regards Hawthorne's preference for sketches and unfinished works of art, for instance, it is sufficient to compare his remarks with a passage from a letter of John Keats to his brother George (November 1818), to see how close Hawthorne is, in this respect, to the Romantics. While at the studio of his friend Haydon, Keats had seen some prints of the Italian primitives, and he thus commented on them: "They are even finer to me than more accomplish'd works—as there was left so much room for the imagination" (31).

Hawthorne's admiration for Michelangelo's unfinished statues is clearly reflected in an important passage of *The Marble Faun*, where Hilda, a gifted copyist of the great Italian masters, discusses with her friend Kenyon (an American sculptor) his bust of Donatello, the young Italian who, with Miriam—another artist—completes the cast of the romance. The bust is as yet "not nearly finished", and she comments: "A few more strokes of the chisel might change the whole expression, and so spoil it for what is now worth" (32). This explains Hawthorne's deliberate avoidance, in his own form of art, of those "few more strokes" of the pen that would dispel the

atmosphere of mystery, of implied meanings, of the moral enigmas explored, but not dogmatically resolved, by the author. In this connection, the whole Chapter V ("Miriam's Studio") is particularly significant: answering Donatello, who has asked her why she makes her room so "shadowy", she says:

We artists purposely exclude sunshine, and all but a partial light,... because we think it necessary to put ourselves at odds with Nature before imitating her. This strikes you very strangely, does it not? But we make very pretty pictures sometimes with artfully arranged lights and shadows (33).

It is almost as if, through Miriam, Hawthorne were here explaining to one of his puzzled readers the essential aesthetic principle that rules his art, and the analogy between the figurative arts and the romancer's craft which underlies *The Marble Faun*, as well as many other works by Hawthorne, is made explicit by the passage which immediately follows the one just quoted:

The room had the customary aspect of a painter's studio: one of those delightful spots that hardly seem to belong to the actual world, but rather to be the outward type of a poet's haunted imagination, where there are glimpses, sketches, and half-developed hints at beings and more beautiful than we can anywhere find in reality (34).

"A poet's haunted imagination": nothing could more perceptively describe Hawthorne's own imagination than these words, which recall another, extremely revealing writing of his, significantly entitled "The Haunted Mind", that has justly received much critical attention. As Hyatt H. Waggoner points out, this sketch provides us with "a unique glimpse of the characteristically romantic approach to life and to art" (35) and Agostino Lombardo has lucidly demonstrated how the sketch is to be considered as an emblem of Hawthorne's own artistic vision (36).

Although Hawthorne was no systematic theorist, yet he embodied his lifelong meditations on art and its cognitive power - the "awful gift" of the artist, whose visionary experience creates myths truer than reality - in endless tales and, directly or indirectly, in all his romances. In *The Marble Faun* we may discern his most sustained effort to create a myth where his main themes, man's moral life and the nature and function of art, would so interfuse each other as to suggest the only road to salvation open to modern man: "It is only through the medium of the imagination that we can lessen those iron fetters, which we call truth and reality, and make ourselves even partially sensible what prisoners we are" (37).

It has been rightly observed that Hawthorne is really a sceptic who tends

to doubt what man can accomplish either by his reason or by divine inspiration (38): it is to the artist that "all the worn-out heart of the old earth is revealed... under a new form" as "his magic" evokes the innermost essence of things «from the caverns of the soul" (39). "The Prophetic Pictures" (1873) is one of Hawthorne's many stories about artists; it is also, perhaps, the one where he most explicitly dramatized his perception of the potency of art to pierce the veil of appearance:

The artist - the true artist - must look beneath the surface. It is his gift - his proudest, but often a melancholy one - to see the inmost soul, and by a power undefinable even to himself, to make it glow or darken upon the canvas, in glances that express the thought and sentiment of years (40)

The nameless magician/painter of the story, one of Hawthorne's many projections of his own doubts and fears into a fictional double, glories in his God-like creative power — "O potent Art! Thou art the image of the Creator's own... Am I not thy Prophet?" — yet is estranged from his fellow-beings (for Hawthorne, the deepest misery he can conceive), "insulated from the mass of human kind", as he has "no aim - no pleasure - no sympathies but what are ultimately connected with his art" (41). Ironically, while the painter can read "other bosoms with an acuteness almost praeternatural", till the *dénouement* of the story he fails to see "the disorder of his own", blinded by the inordinate pride he takes in his "awful gift"; suddenly experiencing a shock of self-recognition, he then voices the doubt which is forever present to Hawthorne's mind: "Was not... he a chief agent of the coming evil which he had foreshadowed?" (42)

The magic of art is almost always black magic, the "innumerable forms" that the artist calls into being from nothingness are dark, often malignant shapes, and the mere reader of men's souls may be transformed, unaware, into an agent of their destinies. The portraits — a favourite symbol with Romantic writers, used to great effect also in *The Marble Faun* — in this story symbolize not only the artist's clairvoyance, but also "a malignant fatality of which he may be the guilty medium" (43). Roger Chillingworth, the diabolical physician who completes the cast of *The Scarlet Letter*, may be seen as representing this sinister side of art, and particularly of romance art: the insight of the artist can be dangerous, and drive men to despair and destruction through his dark knowledge (44).

Hawthorne's troubled self-questioning as regards his art, obliquely dramatized in most of his work (exemplary, in this sense, "The Devil in Manuscript", in which Oberon is a transparent *persona* for Hawthorne himself), is unambiguously expressed in an important passage of the *American*

Notebooks: "Words - so innocent and powerless as they are, as standing in a dictionary, how potent for good and evil they become, in the hands of one who knows how to combine them!" (45).

As Richard Poirier has observed, we can view American literature, especially prose, as the attempt to create, through words, a world in which "consciousness might be free to explore its powers and affinities" (46). Among pre-Jamesian American writers, Hawthorne is perhaps the one who most consciously and consistently claimed that he was creating, through language, "a semblance of a world out of airy matter" (47), an imaginative environment independent of oppressive "actualities" where the "deep meaning" of reality, perceived by the imagination but evading the analysis of the mind, could be bodied forth in symbols subtly affecting the reader's sensibilities (48).

Yet Hawthorne is well aware of the dangers involved in such a creation, of the tensions and polarities it posits but never fully resolves, as in art - and in life - it can never be a question of mutually exclusive solutions or alternatives: words, as he well saw, possess a *simultaneous* potency for good *and* evil. In life, we are all just such figures as "artists convert into Saints or assassins, as their pictorial purposes demand" (49): the human condition is, inevitably, one of moral ambiguity, where all "are both innocent and culpable", and as Joel Porte perceptively observes, romance is "the realm of tragic art, where Othello and Ophelia are neither as black nor as white as each could seem at first glance" (50).

The *chiaroscuro* Hawthorne romantically favoured in painting, that blend and interplay of darkness and light he found so deeply, if disturbingly, suggestive, is the pictorial counterpart - often, the "objective correlative" - of his perception of the inextricable alloy of good and evil in man's moral nature. Through his magicians/artists, then, Hawthorne conveys his deep conviction that indeed "Fair is foul and foul is fair" (51), as they - and they only - can realize once their "praeternatural" power (what Melville so unforgettably and perceptively described as Hawthorne's «power of blackness») has allowed them to probe beneath the surface of appearance, which is only a thin crust spread on "that pit of blackness that lies beneath us, everywhere" (52).

Significantly, these words are spoken by Miriam, herself the type of the Romantic artist, whose affinities with magicians and witches, suggested through her dark, Oriental beauty and her mysterious past and present behaviour, have been further intimated, few pages before, in the passage describing her hysterical fit (as is well known, popular superstition viewed such fits as proof of daemonic possession, and many a witch had been

burned at the stake on similar evidence, by Hawthorne's Puritan ancestors). Yet this insight into the chasm gaping under us everywhere - which reminds one of the medioeval depictions of Hell - gives man the means to reach, through toil and suffering, a necessary and saving knowledge of evil and of man's ambiguous nature. The artist cannot, like Prospero in *The Tempest*, "break his staff" and renounce his awful power, as salvation lies in recognition and acceptance.

Shadows, a "partial light" (the half-seen is always more suggestive, as the "strong illumination" of a "dusky picture" more often than not will show that it has little objective merit), glimpses, sketches, and half-developed hints (53): it is with these that Hawthorne makes up his "poetic or fairy precinct, where actualities would not so terribly be insisted upon" (54). With a typically Romantic paradox, "actualities" are in effect, to Hawthorne, "airy and unsubstantial", while the faery precinct of romance is the reflection of the only true reality: Italy, or rather Rome, is the place where we become conscious of "this dreamy character of the present... all matters that we handle or dream nowadays look [here] evanescent and visionary alike", since here "the present moment is pressed down or crowded out" (55). The artist, like Aylmer in "The Birthmark", should not fail "to look beyond the shadowy scope of time": The never-never land of Romance is the timeless past, infinitely remote from our every-day experience, yet infinitely more real and meaningful. Hawthorne believed that no records of actuality had the power to give us an insight, however imperfect, into the depths of human nature, as his "psychological romances" so successfully manage to do: as is usual with him, he is chiefly interested not in recreating life, manners, and picturesque landscapes and sights *per se*, but in consciously using the material of his outward observation to create a moral, not a physical locale. Thus every object may become endowed with spiritual life and significance in the "unexpected glimpse" which removes it from the ordinary world:

There is a singular effect oftentimes when, out of the midst of engrossing thought and deep absorption we suddenly look up, and catch a glimpse of external objects. We seem at such moments to look farther and deeper into them, than by any premeditated observation; it is as if they met our eyes alive, and with all their hidden meaning on the surface (56).

Moreover, this "inscape", as it has been called, gains a dimension of psychological depth and of moral significance from the very elusiveness of its implications, as well as from its "fidelity to the truth of the human heart" (57). Hawthorne, like Melville, was writing for those who, in a book of fiction, look "... at bottom, even for more reality, than real life itself can show", and

he, too, felt (as can be seen from his constant artistic practice) that "It is with fiction as with religion: it should present another world, and yet one to which we feel the tie" (58).

It would then be [limiting] to see the "otherness" of the world presented in *The Marble Faun* simply as Italy, and the tie readers should feel as merely the consciousness an American may have of this alien land, though this prefiguring of the "international theme" is quite important. This other world, typified by Italy, is, above all, that "heightened reality" of the romancer's own making, designed "to bear, of course, a certain relation to human nature and human life, but still... artfully and airily removed from our mundane sphere", as Hawthorne writes in the "Conclusion" to *The Marble Faun* (59); a higher reality, that is, achieved by both using and transcending the Actual (60). The tie Melville deems necessary is also essential to Hawthorne: in him, it is the realization, on the readers' part, that the vicissitudes and struggles of his characters are only the types, the symbolical rendering of the eternal moral drama in which all men are inextricably and inevitably involved.

The "inscape" of human action and reactions, which Hawthorne describes in *The Marble Faun* as "a fragile handiwork, more easily rent than mended", must be accepted without what Keats had called an "irritable reaching after fact & reason" (61). Unfortunately, the readers of *The Marble Faun* did insist "upon looking closely at the wrong side of the tapestry... tearing its web apart, with the idle purpose of discovering how the threads have been knit together" (62), and thus in a later edition of the romance the author, much against his will, complied with the importunate insistence of those many readers who demanded "further elucidations respecting the mysteries of the story" (63). To a critic who had complained of the shadowy character of the plot in *The Marble Faun*, he had written:

As for what you say of the plot I do not agree that it has been left in an imperfect state. The characters of the story come out of obscurity and vanish into it again, like the figures on the slides of a magic lantern; but in their transit, they have served my purpose, and shown all that was essential for them to reveal (64).

In adding the "Conclusion", Hawthorne states with his customary diffidence and indirection that he complies with the readers' wishes with reluctance, as the necessity they feel for explanation makes him sensible that he can have succeeded but imperfectly, at best, in throwing about this Romance the kind of atmosphere essential to the effect at which he aimed (65).

Hawthorne, here as elsewhere, is not apologizing or lamenting his failure

(as some critic have, too readily, believed, taking his words at face value): rather, he is obliquely protesting against the persevering of the readers who keep asking the wrong questions - wrong, of course, from an artistic point of view, as the elucidations requested rightly appear to Hawthorne as a violation of an essential aesthetic principle. The readers, to Hawthorne's regret, have shown themselves to be too literal-minded and unimaginative to understand that "some laws and proprieties [of the story and the characters] should be implicitly and insensibly acknowledged". He is even more explicit a little further on: "As respects all who ask such questions, the book is, to that extent, a failure" (66). What Hawthorne is saying here is that a work of art relies, for its success, on eliciting the proper response from the reader, who must possess - or be led to acquire - that imaginative insight essential to both artist and beholder.

In the light of the analogy between the figurative arts and the art of the romancer outlined in the foregoing pages, what Hawthorne says of those who observe Donatello's unfinished bust is meant to be applied to the readers of *The Marble Faun*:

Most spectators mistake it for an unsuccessful attempt towards copying the features of the Faun of Praxiteles. One observer in a thousand is conscious of something more, and lingers long over this mysterious face, departing from it reluctantly, and with many a glance thrown backward: what perplexes him is the riddle that he sees propounded there (67).

Most readers, then, fail to understand and appreciate *The Marble Faun* because they mistake it for an (unsuccessful) attempt towards copying reality, the ordinary and probable, everyday course of man's life: if we approach a romance with the expectation of finding in it a realistic rendering of actualities, such as the novel provides, of course we must be disappointed and dissatisfied. But the romancer's audience should be like that one, perceptive "observer in a thousand" who approaches the work of art in the proper perspective, and feels, dimly yet poignantly, that the artist has somehow captured the mystery, the riddle of existence. The work of art, however, only offers clues, not positive answers, and the decoding of its meaning must be done by each reader for himself: "Nobody... ought to read poetry, or look at pictures and statues, who cannot find a great deal more in them than the poet or artist has actually expressed. Their highest merit is suggestiveness" (68). It is in this light that one must view the possibility of choice between different "morals" - intended as attempts and modes of interpreting life and experience, both real and psychological, in order to discover their inner significance - which the reader is given at the end of *The Marble Faun*.

The many references and direct addresses to the reader that we find in Hawthorne's Prefaces, and particularly in *The Marble Faun* (extremely important, in this connection, is the beginning of Chapter L), are then to be seen not so much as almost pathetic appeals for sympathy, but rather as an effort to educate the reading public. Aware that in experimenting with a new mode of expression he had to create an audience for it, Hawthorne felt that the role of the reader could no longer be passive, but rather that his imaginative, intuitive response was an essential requisite to complete the work of art itself. The ensuing multiplicity of possible interpretations is thus the outcome of a conscious technical device Hawthorne devised and developed in order to embody his aesthetic beliefs. It is therefore wrong to see the action and most of all the finale of *The Marble Faun* as evidence of Hawthorne's weakening grasp on his material, of his increasing inadequacy to cope with the overall significance of his symbolic structures as he wanders, "lost" and "groping", in "the twilight of romance". This multiplicity, characteristic of Hawthorne's best work, is ultimately necessary for any truly vital work of art, and it partly explains the permanent interest and value of his fiction for modern readers and critics. We may apply to the structure of *The Marble Faun* what Jorge Luis Borges observes of a particularly significant passage in the romance, where Miriam speaks of the chasm in the Forum:

It is a multiple symbol, a symbol that is capable of many, perhaps incompatible, values. Such values can be offensive to reason, to logical understanding, but not to dreams, which have their singular and secret algebra, and in whose ambiguous realm one thing may be many. Hawthorne's world is the world of dreams... his reality was always... the lunar world of the fantastic imagination (69).

Hawthorne followed to the end of his artistic career the belief that "unity can ultimately be understood only through the infinite proliferation of detail" (70). Thus, for him every detail, however apparently trivial, had its importance, its place in the pattern he was slowly and somewhat laboriously unfolding, like the numberless (and, taken one by one, insignificant) *tesserae* of a mosaic which are, however, all necessary to form the overall design and produce the total effect aimed at by the artist. Hence the numerous and minute descriptions of artistic objects in the romance, which gains its imagistic richness and complexity precisely from their presence and multiple significations: by constantly alluding to the figurative arts, Hawthorne is aiming (with success) at suggesting "a situation in which everything perceived has the symbolic status of an aesthetic object" (71).

It must also be added that, as Harry Levin perceptively remarks, the many

cross-references to works of art present in *The Marble Faun* must moreover be seen as a technique of characterization, "as it is with Proust", and that as the tale is essentially devoted to describing the relationship between individual experience and its reflection in art, this "is seen both as the key to and an expression of character... Artistic objects are used in *The Marble Faun* to emblemize the human meaning of Donatello's transformation" (72).

E. A. Poe, in examining one of the *Twice-Told Tales*, which Hawthorne published in their final (third) edition in 1851, observed with approbation: "Every word *tells*, as there is not a word which does not tell" (73). He later adds that, in a short story - to him, the only admissible form of prose-writing - "there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design". This of course, applies especially to Hawthorne's best tales and to *The Scarlet Letter*, where indeed every word "tells": yet on the whole it seems to me that, though the structure of *The Marble Faun* is doubtless looser than the closely-knit compactness and inevitability of his best plots, even in this much longer work Hawthorne managed to control with considerable success his wealth of details, symbolic cross-references and implications. As R. W. B. Lewis rightly points out, the occasional incoherence in the plot of the romance "remains for the most part superficial and in the execution:... the deficiencies of *The Marble Faun* are deficiencies of talent rather than of genius", and they do not impair "our view of the classical design of the action" (74).

Thus, though so many authoritative critics deny it, in my opinion Hawthorne did achieve, in this work, that structural unity which is so essential to any work of art, by a skilful integration of theme, narrative, and symbol. The action of *The Marble Faun*, with all its complex web of descriptions and cross-references to works of the figurative arts, must be seen as a single, enormously extended metaphor for Hawthorne's central theme, man's moral life and the "riddle of the soul's growth".

Before discussing the other aspect selected for consideration, the characterization of Hilda, in view of her symbolic role in the romance an attempt to clarify Hawthorne's attitude to Catholicism may help towards an assessment of this controversial figure. As was to be expected, ambivalent and at times ambiguous, Hawthorne's attitude to Catholicism is recorded in the *Italian Notebooks* and in *The Marble Faun*: in the romance, it would seem that the positive aspects of the Catholic faith receive more attention than its negative ones, though these last are also present in a number of passages. Hawthorne was repelled by the worldliness and corruption of the Roman clergy;

For here was a priesthood, pampered, sensual, with red and bloated cheeks, and carnal eyes. With apparently a grosser development of animal life than most men, they were placed in an unnatural relation with woman, and thereby lost the healthy, human conscience that pertains to other human beings, who own the sweet household ties connecting them with wife and daughter (75).

Edward Cifelli thinks that Hawthorne sums up his (obviously adverse) feelings about "the relation of the Italian people, clergy and laity, to their religion" in the passage quoted above and in the sentences immediately following it, concluding that this page, with other evidence, suggests that Hawthorne "for an unknown reason, probably held a mild bias towards Italians" (76).

Admittedly, if taken literally, the passage and what follows it, can hardly be construed as an appreciation of Catholics, both clergy and laity; the appearance of the priests is described with an almost Swiftian savagery in its selection of gross, telling physical details. Yet, the reader should always be on his guard against interpreting the words and thoughts of any Hawthornian character as the direct expression of the author's personal attitude. In this particular case, we must keep in mind that these reflections are made by Kenyon, frightened and anguished by the mysterious disappearance of the girl he loves, the virginal and helpless Hilda: not unnaturally, his fears tend to picture the dangers of the alien city in dark colours, insisting on carnality and depravity. Hawthorne himself points this out explicitly in the lines immediately preceding the passage in question:

It seemed to Kenyon, looking through the darkly coloured medium of his fears, that all modes of crime were crowded into the close intricacy of Roman streets, and that there was no redeeming element, such as existed in other dissolute and wicked cities (77).

A page later, we find: "To Kenyon's morbid view, there appeared to be a contagious element, rising foglike from the ancient depravity of Rome..."

After two pages, Hawthorne describes Kenyon's accidental encounter with the Catholic father who had confessed Hilda in St. Peter's. He is "a priest of mild, venerable aspect... It might be that the reverend kindness of the old man's expression took Kenyon's heart by surprise", and putting aside, for the moment, his prejudices against the Catholic clergy, the sculptor addresses him respectfully, asking for help to find Hilda (78). This is not meant to deny that Hawthorne did think, at times, that there was much he did not approve of in the "popish faith", such as the obvious corruption of some of its clergy, its "gaudy superstitions", and the alloy of human and divine elements in its

rites and churches. He also felt, however, that Catholicism mercifully offered the possibility of regaining that "freshness and elasticity of innocence" denied by the stern, unforgiving Puritan faith according to which innocence, once lost, is lost for ever, even after the most torturing repentance: "What an institution confession is. Man needs it so, that it seems God must have ordained it" (79).

Hawthorne felt that the Catholic Church had the capacity to satisfy the needs of the human heart, as he makes clear in Ch. XXXV, where the climactic reunion between Donatello and Miriam, mediated by Kenyon, takes place under the statue of Julius III, in Perugia: "No matter though it were modelled for a Catholic chief priest, the desolate heart whatever be its religion, recognizes in that image the likeness of a father" (80). The statue which stretches out the hand of benediction over the "guilty and repentant pair", bending upon them its "visage of grand benignity", is the symbol of the understanding, benevolence, and forgiveness that may be found in Catholicism.

Most of all, then, Hawthorne was impressed by the possibility of spiritual rebirth lying within the reach of Catholic worshippers, to be gained through confession and the intimate, confidential appeal to the saints, who mediate between them and God acting as advocates "so wise to comprehend the case, and eloquent to plead it, and powerful to win pardon whatever were the guilt". In this connection, what Hawthorne observes in describing a young man kneeling in front of a shrine in St. Peter's after "an agony of remorseful recollection", is particularly significant: "If this youth had been a Protestant, he would have kept all that torture pent up in his heart and let it burn there, till it seared him into indifference" (81). The inference seems clear, though it is not made explicit: on the one hand, repentance joined with faith in the infinite mercy of God and the help of understanding, friendly intermediaries, brings about a rebirth of the soul; on the other, the "pent-up torture" ultimately leads to what equals spiritual death - isolation and indifference.

While much space is devoted to the importance of Catholic confessions in *The Marble Faun*, where one of the most carefully built-up climaxes of the plot is represented by Hilda's confession in St. Peter's (Chapters XXXVIII and XXXIX), we may recall that in *The Scarlet Letter* Chapters X and XI are devoted to the necessity of confession and the torture "pent up" in a Protestant sinner's heart. The crowning climax of this work is in fact this sinner's confession, Dimmesdale's passionate, public avowal of his long-hidden, dark guilt. It is unnecessary to stress the crucial importance Hawthorne has always attached, throughout his work, to the breaking down of the barriers that tragically trap the individual, isolating him from the rest

of mankind: since it is mainly unacknowledged guilt that cuts off man from his fellow-beings and from God, only a frank avowal of his sin can free him from his prison and reintegrate him into the community.

It must be noted, however, that Dimmesdale's confession is of an ambiguous import: it "full of anguish and repentance" it is also his ultimate triumph, what one might term the farewell performance of a man skilled in moving and holding his audience. The scaffold is, simultaneously, a place of infamy, a sort of pulpit, and also a sort of stage - Hawthorne himself stresses the theatrical quality of the episode, speaking of "the drama of guilt and sorrow in which they had all been actors", and of the minister's confession as of "its closing scene" (82). The whole chapter is conceived and presented dramatically, as a "closing scene": the grouping of the four principal actors in full view of the "horror-stricken multitude", the startling revelation, the *coup de théâtre* of the scarlet letter on Dimmesdale's breast half-revealed for one tantalizing moment, and finally, the minister's death of "triumphant ignominy". Hawthorne insists on the "triumphal" quality of Dimmesdale's confession, quite different from the "penitential self-abasement" referred to in Ch. X: "The minister stood with a flush of triumph in his face, as one who, in the crisis of acutest pain, had won a victory" (83).

Hawthorne is here as ambiguous and elusive as ever: is Dimmesdale really saved by his confession, is he really redeeming his hypocrisy and guilt by this final act of courage, by choosing "a death of triumphant ignominy" after his inability to face a life of mortifying ignominy? One is reminded, at this point, of the words of the fourth, and most dangerous, Tempter in T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*:

But think, Thomas, think of glory after death

...

Seek the way of martyrdom, make yourself the lowest
On earth, to be high in heaven.

and of Becket's consequent anguished self-questioning:

Is there no way, in my soul's sickness,
Does not lead to damnation in pride?

...

Can I neither act nor suffer
Without perdition? (84)

Dimmesdale does not seem to realize this danger, as his last words are: "Had either of these agonies been wanting, I had been lost for ever!" (85);

though Hawthorne, here, luckily refrains from authorial comment, we must not forget, however, what he says of the minister in an earlier chapter: "... the ruined wall... the breach which evil has once made in the human soul is never, in this mortal state, repaired" (86).

Whatever Hawthorne's doubts the cathartic value of a Puritan public confession, his persistent preoccupation with this problem is most fully embodied in *The Marble Faun*, where he stresses, openly contrasting Catholicism to Puritanism, the "inestimable" and seemingly more effectively regenerating powers of a Catholic confession. In the *Italian Notebooks*, Hawthorne notes that the individuality of Catholic worship is preterable to "the joint-stock concern" Protestants make of religion (87). One must never forget, however, that Hawthorne, as is well known, was indifferent to dogma: he was never baptized, never adhered to any particular form of orthodox cult, and nobody would wish to contradict G. P. Voigt when he states that Hawthorne's appreciation of certain features of the Catholic Church was "by no means strong enough... to become allegiance to the Catholic credo and code of ethics" (88).

When *The Marble Faun* first appeared, it was possible for reviewers to interpret it both as an apology for Catholicism and a sturdy defence of Protestantism (89). There can be no doubt, however, that both interpretations are to be rejected, as Hawthorne was not interested in theology: the problem he explored in *The Marble Faun* (and elsewhere) was not ethical or metaphysical, but rather a psychological one, though explored in ethical and metaphysical terms (90). In this romance, therefore, Catholicism and Protestantism were used by Hawthorne as two functional metaphors for contrasting ways of interpreting spiritual experience, and their dialectic opposition serves the purpose of illuminating the *psychomachia* he constantly chose as the action of his romances and tales.

Of the four main characters composing the cast of *The Marble Faun*, Hilda has most often been singled out for comment and discussion by critics: strictures on the "Dove" (as she is often called in the romance) have become a commonplace, since she has seldom failed to irritate and repel readers and critics, with the exception of some early reviewers and, notably, of Henry James (91). It is of course true that Hilda has little, if any, appeal for the modern reader: the question is, however, whether we should take at face value the passages where Hawthorne apparently lavishes admiration - either through the other characters or in his own person - on the girl, a sort of sublimation of New England girlhood and, at the same time, the emblem of divine purity and goodness.

The general feeling is that Hawthorne has been blinded by the nineteenth-century sentimental *ethos* that idealized women, and has thus created a *donna angelicata* "blond and snow-white enough to be exempt from original sin" (92), chivalrously setting aside his rather pessimistic view of mankind in reference to current commonplaces on the sanctity of womanhood; the matter seems clinched by the love-match at the end of the story between the fair heroine and the morally irreproachable Kenyon. Again, however, we should keep in mind Hawthorne's connaturate ambiguousness and ambivalence, what D. H. Lawrence bluntly called his "duplicity", before accepting this as an assessment. If Hilda is essential to the achievement of Hawthorne's intention in *The Marble Faun*, as Waggoner and others hold (93), then we should investigate more closely what his intention in creating this character might have been.

Hawthorne was certain that men and women were not angels, and whenever he pronounces one of his heroines to be an "angel", such as Beatrice Rappaccini or Hilda, he is always extremely careful to stress their separation from the world, their incapacity to establish a satisfying relationship with other human beings — an important difference between the two girls must, however, be pointed out: Beatrice has had no choice and yearns for company and love (94), while Hilda is her own mistress and pleased with her lonely life, at least till shortly before the end of the romance. Thus when Hawthorne stresses that Hilda does not belong to the mortal sphere, but rather dwells in an ethereal atmosphere, he is really saying that she is not a fully developed, fully living human being. This is further confirmed if we consider Hawthorne's recurring pattern of progress from innocence to experience, clearly present in *The Marble Faun* which is, more explicitly than any other Hawthornian work, a *Bildungsroman*. In fact, as is well known, the title chosen by the British publishers for the romance was, aptly if too obviously, *Transformation*: the four main characters have the function to embody, each according to his or her nature, Hawthorne's great theme, the spiritual process of education through sin or exposure to sin, and suffering.

At the beginning of the romance, Miriam and Kenyon are presented as more mature and aware than either Donatello or Hilda; Miriam because she is the heiress to the European past and experience, Kenyon because he combines the sharp clarity of the Puritan mind with the insight of the artist. Donatello and Hilda may be grouped together as they represent two different aspects of (inadequate) innocence: he is a "Faun", "the natural man", all instinct and sense - less than a man, while she is an "angel", all spirit and abstractness - less than a woman. Miriam's words to her, early in the book, are particularly significant: "As an angel, you are not much amiss: but as a

human creature, and a woman among earthly men and women, you need a sin to soften you" (95). Though Miriam is not to be consistently taken as speaking for the author (96), this description of Hilda is so much in keeping with his habitual views that it is impossible not to accept it as representing Hawthorne's real attitude to his character. Of course, neither Miriam nor Hawthorne means that Hilda should actually commit a sin herself, but that she should be aware of the existence of evil, realizing that "liability to sin, sorrow, decay and death" (97) is an integral, and necessary, part of human nature.

At the end of the romance, Donatello and Miriam are shown to have changed for the better, as through sin and sorrow he has reached spiritual manhood (in Miriam's words, "sin ... has really become an instrument most effective in the education of intellect and soul") (98), while she is saved by her imaginative grasping of the analogy between their own story and "the story of the fall of man":

The story of the fall of man! Is it not repeated in our romance of Monte Beni? And may we follow the analogy yet further? Was that very sin - into which Adam precipitated himself and all his race - was it the destined means by which, over a long pathway of toil and sorrow, we are to attain a higher, brighter, and profounder happiness, than our lost birthright gave? (99)

Kenyon is also transformed, but for the worse, since the puritan component of his nature has gained the upper hand and he no longer can be an artist: "Imagination and the love of art have both died out of me" (100). Hilda, finally, has not changed at all, or at least not significantly, as her acceptance of love and marriage represents no growth in moral awareness. Hilda's incapacity to "transform" herself is clear throughout the romance and Hawthorne himself stresses it repeatedly: see, for instance, an important passage where he underlines how essential the change every human life must undergo, is, "if it ascends to truth or delves into reality" (101), as of necessity it should do. It is evident that Hawthorne is here alluding, respectively, to Donatello and Hilda; furthermore, he adds: "But sometimes, perhaps, the instruction comes without the sorrow; and oftener the sorrow teaches no lesson that abides with us".

Now, Hilda has not really been educated by her knowledge of evil and her sorrow: she still does not understand (and even prays God to keep her ever from understanding) the complexity of the moral "enigmas" she, like every responsible human being, is faced with. As a moral agent, Hilda has to end "a morally incomplete nature, a freakish innocence incapable of stain" (102), and does not, indeed cannot, accept the mixture of good and evil present in

human nature, incapable as she is of overcoming her narrow, dogmatic, and Manichean morality: "If there be any such dreadful mixture of good and evil as you [Kenyon] affirm, and which appears to me almost more shocking than pure evil, - then the good is turned to poison, not the evil to wholesomeness" (103).

After the crisis which takes her to the confessional is past, all her efforts are aimed at excluding from her consciousness the deeply disturbing, to her terrifying, knowledge that chance has forced upon her:

Hilda... had an elastic faculty of throwing off such painful recollections as would be too painful for endurance... Once enabled to relieve herself of the ponderous anguish over which she had so long brooded, she had practiced a subtle watchfulness in preventing its return (104).

Not only, then, the lesson taught her by sorrow has not abided by her, but she does her best to forget it. Her experience, we are told, has given her a "deeper look into the heart of things" (105), yet it is significant that she is now presented as seeing deeper into "the heart of *things*" (the old masters' pictures), not into the heart of human beings. In one of the final chapters (Ch.XLII) Hilda is described while walking in the foul streets of the Ghetto swarming with people, "not only invisible, but *blind*". (106). Surely, this can only mean that in addition to her lack of insight into the heart of her fellow-beings, she actually does not even see them as they really are: she does not realize that they are not abstract personifications, as in a sort of eternal morality play, of vices and virtues, but men and women of flesh and blood with their connaturale, inescapable liability to error and sin, their misery, their desperate need for sympathy.

Hilda's lack of warmth and mercy, her self-righteousness and self-absorption are unambiguously indicated throughout the book in various ways, such as her living in the tower - not only insulated from, but above common mortals; her rejection of Miriam, and more directly in Miriam's and even Kenyon's remarks on her mercilessness. See, for instance, Kenyon's words to Miriam, in answer to her complaint, spoken "mournfully, and with no resentment", that Hilda's severity has driven her to forget the reserves and decorums of her sex, after being cast off by her friend in her hour of need: "The white shining purity of Hilda's heart is a thing apart; and she is bound, by the undefiled material of which God moulded her, to keep that severity which I, as well as you, have recognized" (107).

It cannot be said, therefore, that Hilda's limitations are the discovery of

modern, sceptical readers, and even as early as 1868, a reviewer remarked "the unconscious pharisaism of a child's innocence" shown by Hilda in repulsing Miriam after the crime (108).

If Hilda is unconscious of her pharisaism, it does not necessarily follow that Hawthorne should be unconscious of it, too: the man who had written "There is no other fear so *horrible and unhumanizing* as that which makes a man dread ... to grasp the hand of a friend or brother lest the gripe of pestilence should clutch him" (109), could not fail to perceive how selfish and uncharitable Hilda's behaviour to Miriam is. Lest he should be misunderstood (as in fact has happened), Hawthorne is more explicit in Hilda's "remorseful recollections" after Kenyon has almost forced her to think again of Miriam (Ch. XLII): Hawthorne speaks of "*selfish* care for the spotlessness of our own garments" (110).

Hilda belongs to the group of Hawthorne's imperfect perfectionists", as Clark Griffith defines a category of his characters (111): her "perfection" is ultimately worthless, since it has not been "wrought by toil and pain" (112), and since she keeps here purity untainted at the price of being cut off from experience and by rejecting her fellow-beings as corrupted and corrupting; refusing, that is, to accept the moral responsibilities connected with the human condition. I do not agree with Hyatt Waggoner when he thinks that Hawthorne would have been "unmeasurably shocked" if he had realized that modern readers tend to see Hilda, for most of the book, "as a feminine version of the man of adamant" (113). In point of fact, I believe that Hawthorne was perfectly able to realize that a girl who is described by Kenyon (whom Waggoner and others, incidentally, see as Hawthorne's fictional double) as a terribly severe judge who judges with the remorselessness of a steel blade, and who needs no mercy and therefore does not know how to show any (114), might well - and, indeed, should - be taken for a girl of adamant.

There is yet another, and extremely significant, aspect of Hilda's symbolic role in the structure of the romance to be examined, in order to assess more fully what Hawthorne's intentions in creating her might have been. Hilda quite evidently stands for Puritanism, the "white light" so often associated with her. The juxtaposition between the multi-coloured light that stands for Catholicism and the white light of Puritanism, is one of Hawthorne's central metaphors in *The Marble Faun*, and though Hawthorne does not explicitly commit himself in this romance, yet in an earlier story, "Main Street" (where he also contrasts the two forms of worship in the same terms), the showman ends his brief presentation of the Puritan settlers' faith by saying that when "their lamps began to burn more dimly, with a less genuine lustre, ... it might be seen how hard, cold, and confined was their system".

Hawthorne sees the contrast between Catholicism and Puritanism also in terms of complexity and simplicity. Simplicity may be admirable, but to Hawthorne it is insufficient for the deep moral insight man must achieve: "Blessed are the simple emotions, be they dark or bright! It is the lurid intermixture of the two that produces the illuminating blaze of the infernal regions" (115).

These "infernal regions" are man's heart, the dark and frightful "cavern" everybody must explore in order to know himself and others:

... those dark caverns, into which all men must descend, if they would know anything beneath the surface and illusive pleasures of existence. And when they emerge, though dazzled and blinded by the first glare of daylight, they take truer and sadder views of life forever after-wards (116).

The "journey through the heart" (117) is the action which Hawthorne constantly dramatizes, with variations, in his work: an action ideally suited to the needs of a moral imagination like his.

There is no doubt, then, that in *The Marble Faun* Hawthorne contrasted the dark-haired, creative Miriam, who symbolizes complexity, experience, Catholicism, and the fair New England copyist, who symbolizes simplicity, innocence, and Puritanism: this is, besides, the Hawthornian, pre-Jamesian version of the "international theme", Europe versus America. It is much to be doubted, however, whether Hawthorne saw the contrast as Henry James later did, notably in *The Wings of the Dove*, where Milly Threale is under many respects modelled on Hilda (118): in fact, I do not believe that by making Miriam lead, henceforth, a life of penance, while the Dove will go back to the American present, to be "enshrined and worshipped as a household saint" (119), in an aseptic New England home, by the adoring (and morally broken) Kenyon, Hawthorne intended to stress the superiority of Hilda and all she stands for. It may be noted, moreover, that in thus prefiguring Hilda's married life, Hawthorne once again indirectly points out how little she has really progressed: from her lofty tower to a domestic shrine, still above common mankind, still a saint and not "a woman among earthly men and women". We may also add that Kenyon's and Hilda's return to America is made to appear as a flight rather than a conscious, responsible choice, as they flee from what she will not, indeed cannot understand and accept, while Kenyon somewhat abjectly renounces his insight into the complexity of man's moral life (and so, consequently, renounces art), for the security offered by dogma, embodied by the "fair daughter of the Puritans". In the closing chapter of the romance, the sculptor voices his "perplexity", Hawthorne

ne's version of the "fortunate fall" that underlies, and gives unity to, the whole action of *The Marble Faun*:

Sin has educated Donatello, and elevated him. Is sin, then, which we deem such a dreadful blackness in the universe, - is it like sorrow, merely an element of human education, through which we struggle to a higher and purer state than we could otherwise have attained? Did Adam fall, that we might ultimately rise to a far loftier paradise than his (120)?

Hilda can only be unmeasurably shocked at this insight: "'Oh, hush!' cried Hilda, shrinking from him with an expression of horror... 'This is terrible; ... You have shocked me beyond words!'" Afraid to lose her and frightened by her stern rebuke, poor Kenyon immediately retracts, protesting his orthodoxy and begging her for guidance:

Forgive me, Hilda!... I never did believe it! But the mind wanders wild and wide; and, so lonely as I live and work, I have neither pole-star above nor light of cottage-windows here below, to bring me home. Were you my guide, my counsellor... with that white wisdom which clothes you as a celestial garment, all would go well. O Hilda, guide me home! (121)

His surrender could not be more complete: as an artist, Kenyon is clearly finished, as Hawthorne makes us understand in various ways - see, for instance, his utter lack of interest for the magnificent antique statue he finds in the Campagna, while waiting for Miriam and Donatello who will bring him news of the vanished Hilda: "He could hardly, we fear, be reckoned a consummate artist, because there was something dearer to him than his art". Before his uninterested eyes, "the statue seemed to fall asunder again, and became only a heap of worthless fragments". Thus Hawthorne clearly indicates that we must choose "between artistic profundity and Hilda-ism; they are incompatible" (122).

In the light of Hawthorne's moral vision, I think we may be justified in seeing Miriam's fate, though ambiguously suggested and never fully revealed (not even in the "Conclusion"), as more in keeping with Hawthorne's belief in the necessity of accepting the inescapable responsibilities man is faced with. This acceptance results in sorrow, but frees man from irrelevance, since Hawthorne is firmly convinced that we must leave the "paradise of children" (123), the limbo of untested innocence, to reach spiritual adulthood.

We may conclude that Hawthorne's ambivalence towards Puritanism is clearly reflected in his handling of Hilda. What repulsed him in the stern, merciless, narrow-minded faith of the New England "Saints", prompted him to create a stern, merciless, narrow-minded heroine, while he felt, on the

other hand, led to qualify this portrait by stressing some positive sides of her Puritan *ethos*, such as her fearlessness, her honesty, and her sincerity. He also tried to humanize the portrait, and thus make it at the same time seem less abstract, by endowing Hilda with some individualizing and attractive traits: her loveliness and simple charm, her final, courageous hopefulness, her sensitivity to art, and her considerable personal talent - still, we must note that she has the talent of a gifted copyist, not that of a truly creative artist like Miriam: artistic creation is ultimately incompatible with Puritanism.

Hilda's moral and human limitations are, however, still crippling, especially if seen in the thematic context of the whole romance, *The Marble Faun* is concerned with the "riddle of the soul's growth", recognition and acceptance of the existence of evil and of the moral struggle every human being must engage in: Hilda's horror at the suggestion of a "fortunate fall" is calculated to stress, once more, her narrow, uncomprehending dogmatism. Nowhere so clearly does Hawthorne stress the inadequacy of untested innocence and of dogmatic, rigid morality, and it is therefore misleading to see Hawthorne as greatly depending "on Hilda to give the novel its affirmative meaning", as Hyatt Waggoner states (124). Aside from the fact that Hawthorne, as we have seen, usually refrains from positive statements, but rather limits himself to exploring problems and suggesting possible meanings of experience, whatever "affirmative meaning" he might have had in mind for *The Marble Faun* is connected with transformation, not with the refusal even to acknowledge the possibility of change and growth: it cannot, therefore, have been embodied in his incurably innocent, dogmatic, and Manichean daughter of the Puritans.

If my interpretation of the role of each of the four main characters in the overall structure of the romance is correct, then it follows that Hawthorne knew very well what he was doing when he created Hilda. Far from naively sentimentalizing her into an idealization of pure womanhood, and worse, placing her "on a pedestal because of her innocence", he quite consciously and deliberately, if obliquely, made his Dove appear self-righteous and inadequate as a human being (125). Hawthorne was the first American writer to sense that innocence could be cruel as well as vulnerable, as Henry James was later to see very deeply (most of all in *The Golden Bowl*) (126): if modern readers and critics feel dissatisfied with her, there is every reason to believe that this is precisely how Hawthorne intended them to feel.

In one of the final chapters of *The Marble Faun*, Hawthorne says of the Roman Carnival:

At first sight of a spectacle so fantastic and extravagant, a cool observer might have imagined the whole town gone mad; but, in the end, he would see that all this apparently unbounded license is kept strictly within a limit of its own (127).

The impression received by a modern reader when first confronted with the intricacies of the plot and the apparently rambling structure of *The Marble Faun*, may not be dissimilar from the experience of the "cool observer" of the Carnival; yet, too many readers and critics stop at this first impression, failing to realize that the "apparently unbounded license" of the romancer is kept "strictly within a limit of its own", and conclude all too hastily that when writing the romance, Hawthorne had, if not exactly "gone mad", at least lost his artistic bearings completely. I hope I have sufficiently demonstrated, in the foregoing pages, that on the contrary in this last completed and published romance, he could still control with success a seemingly bewildering multiplicity of details and motifs, moulding it into a coherent whole whose unity is the effect of a central insight irradiating, and giving significance to the minutest, carefully selected detail. We may apply to this wealth of details, so confusing and irritating to many critics, what Hawthorne himself says when describing, in "The Custom-House", how the imagination of the romance writer operates:

... all these details, so completely seen, are so spiritualized by the unusual light, that they seem to lose their actual substance, and become things of intellect. Nothing is too small or trifling to undergo this change, and acquire dignity thereby (128).

The danger of an excessive intellectualization (and the consequent abstractness) is avoided imbuing "the forms which fancy summons up" with the "warmer light" of emotion, which communicates to them "as it were, a heart and sensibilities of human tenderness", converting "snow-images into men and women" (129). Thus the "imaginative faculty", whose operations Hawthorne so memorably describes in this justly famous passage, gives life to "the tribe of unrealities" of the "fairy-land" of romance, and at the same time, a moral significance to the concrete objects and places so minutely described in *The Marble Faun*.

Hawthorne sticks to his "secretiveness", as D. H. Lawrence described his typical attitude to his public, in *The Marble Faun* as in his best work, not out of vagueness, but for precise aesthetic reasons, such as I have briefly outlined; for these reasons we may add his "native reserve", as he calls it at the beginning of "The Custom-House", when speaking of "the author" he

says of himself that even before a congenial audience, such as is provided by "the few who will understand him... we may prate of the circumstance that lie around us, and even of ourself [sic], but still keep the inmost Me behind its veil" (130).

We may conclude, finally, that though in some respects *The Marble Faun* may seem dated to us, still its essential modernity of theme and conception, as well as the experimental quality of its technique, should not escape the readers of our time, when the problems most acutely felt by artists, intellectuals, and society at large, are centred on the individual, on loneliness, on the necessity of a choice of life - we could also say, in Dr Johnson's words, of a "choice of eternity" (131) - and on authenticity and personal integrity. I have already pointed out elsewhere the parallel that may be established between Hawthorne's moral vision and the thought of Søren Kierkegaard, to whose extraordinarily actual insights modern man has turned with increasing frequency in his existential predicament: I might add here that we can indeed apply to Hawthorne what has been aptly said of Kierkegaard, that he was able to perceive, beyond the immediate appearance of reality, deep, subterranean tensions, new realities taking shape, the tangle, of contradictions which daily escape our eyes, blinded by the ephemeral dazzle of the surface (132).

In this respect, we may also compare Hawthorne's rejection of rigid, dogmatic morality such as he embodied in Hilda, with Henri Bergson's rejection of the inauthenticity of moral obligation imposed on individuals by what he calls a "société close", dominated by habit, uniformity, and formalism. Bergson speaks of two moralities, "morale close et morale ouverte", which he juxtaposes much in the same terms as Hawthorne's embodiment of Puritan morality in Hilda, and of the kind of morality which realizes itself in Donatello and Miriam, respectively:

Entre la première morale et la seconde il y a ... toute la distance du repos au mouvement. La première est censée immuable. Si elle change, elle oublie aussitôt qu'elle a changé ou n'avoue pas le changement. La forme qu'elle présente à n'importe quel moment prétend être la forme définitive. Mais l'autre est une poussée, une exigence de mouvement: elle est mobilité en principe. C'est par là qu'elle prouverait ... sa supériorité. ... Dans la morale de l'aspiration ... est implicitement contenu le sentiment du progrès (133).

It is precisely the study and depiction of "l'âme ouverte", open to experience and progress, that Hawthorne concerns himself with in *The Marble Faun*, contrasting "the soul's growth" with the immobility of a conscience like Hilda's which can see morality only as an "ensemble d'obligations pures, supposées toutes remplies" (134).

From the very first chapter of the romance, Hawthorne establishes the continuity between past and present in Rome, showing the contradictory, paradoxical forms this continuity presents in the Eternal City: from one of the windows of the sculpture gallery in the Capitol, one could see "the desolate Forum (where Roman washerwomen hang out their linen to the sun), ... modern edifices, piled rudely up with ancient brick and stone, and ... Christian churches, built on the old pavements of heathen temples" (135). We are immediately made to feel that Rome is "Thick with the sense of history and the very taste of time", as H. James will say of Italy (136); for both Hawthorne and James, this density of associations, of artistic masterpieces is juxtaposed to the "thinness" of the American scene so often denounced, and the "massiveness" of the Roman past, the perception of "the weight and density in a bygone life" by making the present "evanescent and visionary" make Romantic - and romance - art possible.

The thickness of texture achieved with the interlocking of minute observations and accumulating, sharply realized detail creates Rome in *The Marble Faun* as "the ultimate art object, a brilliant text of art and life" (137). This text must be interpreted with an awareness of its rich suggestiveness, its creative potential for art, but also of its complexities and ambiguities, its paradoxes, its "riddles": Hawthorne conveys a sense both of life's mystery, and of the capacity of art to plumb it though not to solve it.

We may conclude that Hawthorne during his stay in Rome achieved "the historical sense" as defined by T. S. Eliot, involving a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; ... of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and the temporal together" (138). This historical sense also compelled him to see that creation of art is possible only if the artist can feel the simultaneous presence of the whole of the art of Europe, of the cultural tradition of the West, from antiquity down to the present. As Eliot said, "Tradition... cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour": Allston, Cooper, Irving, Hawthorne, H. James and many others certainly wanted it, and by visiting Europe and working there they gained a cultural heritage and insights, sometimes liberating and sometimes paralyzing, (139) into the meaning of their work as American artists.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1. *The Marble Faun* was "sketched out during a residence of considerable length in Italy, and ... rewritten and prepared for the press in England" (Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun*, with a general introduction by D. Levin, New York 1967, "Preface", p. 22). It was first published in England (1860), with the more explicit title *Transformation*, chosen by the publishers, which Hawthorne disliked.

2. H.A. Waggoner, *Hawthorne. A Critical Study*, rev.ed., Cambridge, Mass. 1967, p. 221.

3. For James and Hawthorne see, among others, T.S. Eliot, "Henry James" (1918), in E. Wilson ed., *The Shock of Recognition*, New York 1955, especially pp. 858-65; H. Read, "Hawthorne", in *Essays in Literary Criticism*, London 1969, pp. 135-8, 142-3; a perceptive essay by L. Trilling, "Hawthorne in Our Time", in *Beyond Culture*, Penguin Books 1967, pp. 159-182; M. Bewley, *The Complex Fate*, New York 1967, where an entire chapter is devoted to pointing out the analogies between *The Marble Faun* and *The Wings of the Dove*.

4. Waggoner, p. 222.

5. L.A. Fielder, *Love and Death in The American Novel*, London 1967, p. 80.

6. F.O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance* (O.U.P. 1968), pp. 356, 359. Italics mine. Cfr. also R.R. Male, *Hawthorne's Tragic Vision*, New York 1964, p. 172: "Hawthorne apparently expected the reader to sense Hilda's icy rigidity and yet to sympathize with her ... We might accept Hilda in a medieval dream vision, but in fiction she is impossible".

7. Waggoner, p. 225.

8. Cf. R.H. Pearce, "Hawthorne and the Twilight of Romance", *Yale Review* v.37 (March 1948), 487-546; M. Cottino Jones, "The *Marble Faun* and a Writer's Crisis", *Studi Americani* 16 (1970), 81-124.

9. Cf. Cottino Jones, 121.

10. Cf. Hawthorne's own comments in the margins of the manuscripts: "Here I come to a standstill! ... I have not the least notion how to get on. I never was in such a predicament before ... There must be a germ in this - I don't know ... How? Why? What sense?" (Quoted in Waggoner, pp. 226-7). On these abortive romances (*The Ancestral Footstep*, *Dr Grimshave's Secret*, *Septimius Felton*, *The Dolliver Romance*), see E.H. Davidson, *Hawthorne's Last Phase*, New Haven, Conn. 1949, and R. Von Abele, *The Death of the Artist: A Study of Hawthorne's Disintegration*, The Hague 1955.

11. Pearce, 487. The critic seems here to be developing, applying it specifically to *The*

Marble Faun, Y. Winters' notorious conclusion to his "Maule's Curse or Hawthorne and the Problem of Allegory" (1938). After pointing out that "Had Hawthorne possessed the capacity for criticizing and organizing conceptions as well as for dramatizing them, he might have risen superior to his disadvantages", Winters sums up his indictment in these words: "When he reserved his formula of alternative possibilities and sought to grope his way blindly to significance, [Hawthorne's] groping was met wherever he moved by smooth impassive surface of the intense inane" (in A.N. Kaul, ed., *Hawthorne. A Collection of Critical Essays*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1966, p.24). For an excellent, though indirect, confutation of Winters' pronouncement, see H.J. Lang, "How Ambiguous is Hawthorne?" in Kaul ed., *op.cit.*, pp.86-98, especially pp.86-7; more directly, G.D. Josipovici has taken issue with Winters in his "Hawthorne's Modernity", *Critical Quarterly* 8 (Winter 1966), 351-60, and in "Hawthorne: Allegory and Compulsion" in *The World and the Book*, Bungay 1971, pp.167-71.

12. Cf. Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun* (MF), *op.cit.*, "Introduction", p.18.
13. Cottino Jones, 121.
14. H. James, "Hawthorne" (1879), in Wilson, ed., *op.cit.*, p.555.
15. MF, "Preface", p.23.
16. Cf. Cottino Jones, 84, 83. See also J.A. Huzzard, "Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*", *Italica*, XXXV (June 1958), 119-24.
17. MF, "Preface", p.23.
18. *Ibidem*, p.22.
19. N. Holmes Pearson, "The *Italian Notebooks* of Nathaniel Hawthorne", Unpublished Dissertation at Yale University, 1942, pp.129, 412. Italics mine.
20. James, p.556.
21. Pearce, 502. Italics mine.
22. Cf. J.K. Folsom, *Man's Accidents and God's Purposes: Multiplicity in Hawthorne's Fiction*, New Haven, Conn., 1963, p.131.
23. Cf. R.W.B. Lewis, *The American Adam*, Chicago 1968, p.117.
24. G.J. Scrimgeour, "The *Marble Faun*: Hawthorne's Faery Land", *American Literature*, XXXVI (Nov. 1964), 282.
25. MF, p.149.
26. O. Wilde, "The Decay of Lying", in *Complete Works*, London 1970, pp.977-8.

27. MF, p.410. Winters' irritation at Kenyon, guilty of refusing to disclose, later in the romance, whether Donatello had pointed Faun's ears or not - though, the critic points out accusingly, the sculptor has had "the opportunity to observe" (Winters, p.22) - must have been considerably increased by this flagrant (and presumably, in the critic's eyes, irresponsible) instance of the "formula of the alternative possibilities".

28. MF, p.280.

29. Cf. e.g., P. Brodtkorb, Jr., "Art Allegory in *The Marble Faun*", *PMLA* LXXVII (1962), 254-67; H. Levin, "Statues from Italy: *The Marble Faun*", in R.H. Pearce, ed., *Hawthorne Centenary Essays*, Columbus, Ohio 1964, pp.119-140; N. Wright, "The Language of Art: Hawthorne", in *American Novelists in Italy*, Philadelphia 1965, pp.138-67.

30. MF, p.36; *Italian Notebooks*, p.411.

31. *Letters of John Keats*, ed. by R. Gittings, Oxford 1970, p.188.

32. MF, p.344.

33. *Ibidem*, p.56.

34. *Ibidem*.

35. Waggoner, p.8. In his discussion of the sketch, Waggoner briefly mentions Keats' praise of sleep (p.9), but fails to point out how closely the following passage parallels Keats' observations about the working of the poet's mind: "In an hour like this, when the mind has a passive sensibility, but no active strength; when the imagination is a mirror, imparting vividness to all ideas, without the power of selecting or controlling them ...".

36. Cf. A. Lombardo, "I racconti di Hawthorne", in *Il simbolismo della letteratura americana*, Essays by Divers Hands, Firenze 1965, pp.106-108. See also, by the same author, *Il diavolo nel manoscritto. Saggi sulla tradizione letteraria americana*, Milano 1974, especially Parts I and II. For a balanced, penetrating assessment of MF, one should also see Lombardo's Introduction to Hawthorne, *Diario*, Venezia 1960, p.21.

37. N. Hawthorne, "The New Adam and Eve", in *Mosses from an old Manse*, Riverside Edition, Boston 1883, II, 279.

38. Cf. J.C. Gerber, ed., *Twentieth-Century Interpretations of The Scarlet Letter*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968, "Introduction", p.11.

39. N. Hawthorne, "The Prophetic Pictures", in *Hawthorne's Short Stories*, ed. with an Introduction by N. Arvin, New York 1946, pp.70-71.

40. *Ibidem*, p.68.

41. *Ibidem*, p.70.

42. *Ibidem*, p.73. For a perceptive analysis of the significance of this tale, see Lombardo, "I racconti di Hawthorne", pp.152-53. Lombardo further points out a suggestive analogy between Hawthorne's persistent awareness (and fear) of the potentialities of art, and Shakespeare as embodied in Jago, and in Prospero's words when he abjures his "so potent art" (pp.158-9, n.112).

43. *Hawthorne's Short Stories*, "Introduction", p.X. For the magic quality possessed by art objects in Hawthorne's works, see also Th.B.Brumbaugh, "Concerning Nathaniel Hawthorne and Art as Magic", *American Imago*, IX (Winter 1954), 399-405. The copy Hilda has made of the famous portrait of Beatrice Cenci and which she keeps in her room on the tower, besides being charged with symbolic connotations, at one point seems to possess magical properties (cf. *MF*, pp.193-4).

44. Cf. J.Porter, *The Romance in America*, Middletown, Conn. 1972, p.112.

45. N.Hawthorne, *The American Notebooks*, ed. by R.Stewart, New Haven, Conn., 1932, p.122. The problem of the artist, which Lombardo rightly sees as central to *MF*, is exemplarily discussed and analyzed in his most recent book on Hawthorne, *Un rapporto col mondo. Saggio sui racconti di Hawthorne*, Roma 1976: see especially pp.11-12; 153-4. For a Freudian analysis of Hawthorne's ambivalent attitude to his own art, see F.C.Crews, *The Sins of the Fathers. Hawthorne's Psychological Themes*, New York 1966, p.155: interesting, but not wholly convincing.

46. R.Poirier, *A World Elsewhere*, New York 1968, "Preface", p.ix.

47. N.Hawthorne, "The Custom-House", in *Great Short Works of Hawthorne*, ed. with an Introduction by F.C.Crews, New York 1967, p.34.

48. Cf. *ibidem*, p.29.

49. *MF*, p.38.

50. Porter, p.151.

51. A.Guldi, in his "Le ambiguità di Hawthorne", *Studi Americani* 1 (1955), 125-42, sees "Young Goodman Brown" as a narrative variation of the witches' words in *Macbeth*; we may however say that Hawthorne's whole work is a constant variation and reworking of this insight.

52. *MF*, p.38.

53. See *ibidem*, p.408. For a perceptive analysis of Hawthorne's use, in his work, of fine-art devices, see L.Shubert, *Hawthorne the Artist. Fine Art Devices in Fiction*, New York 1963; especially interesting is the discussion of Hawthorne's "painting technique" as regards colour and the play of sunlight and shade (pp.98-100). This aspect of Hawthorne's art has also been discussed at length by R.H.Fogle, *Hawthorne's Fiction: The Light and the Dark*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1952. Hawthorne himself, writing to Fields (his publisher) about *The House of the Seven Gables*,

speaks of the romance in pictorial terms: "Many passages of his book ought to be finished with the minuteness of a Dutch picture, in order to give them their proper effect" (quoted in Matthiessen, p.323).

54. *MF*, "Preface", pp.22-23. Ch.Feidelson, Jr., sharing the patronizing attitude towards Hawthorne adopted by some of the critics already quoted, sees Hawthorne's conception of the romance as deriving from his "theoretical indecisiveness": "unable to feel any confidence in the reality of the subjective, and unable, despite the long efforts of his notebooks, to come to grips with the solid earth, Hawthorne evolved his conception of the romance" ("Hawthorne as Symbolist", in Kaul, ed., *op.cit.*, pp.65-6). Feidelson concludes: "If Hawthorne's writings tend to be thin in both respects [richness of imagination and physical substance], it is because he never fully faced the problem of knowledge which his own situation [as a writer] raised" (pp.65-66). So, here we have a Hawthorne who cannot "fully face" theoretical and artistic problems: notwithstanding this crippling limitation, however, he luckily retains enough presence of mind to realize he cannot write a novel *à la manière de Trollope* (whom he sincerely admired), and so, though further confused by "his prejudice in favour of the physical and the rational" and "the reverence for the material present and his trivial view of the imagination" displayed, strangely enough, in "The Custom-House" (cf. Feidelson, pp.65-66), poor Hawthorne (as the critic sees him) managed to evolve his conception of the romance in order to cover up his shortcomings. It is hardly necessary to point out that this account of Hawthorne's creative process and art is far from satisfactory and seems in fact quite unjust.

55. *MF*, p.28.

56. *Ibidem*, pp.295-6.

57. Kaul ed., *op.cit.*, "Introduction", p.1; N.Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables*, Introduced by H.Levin, Columbus, Ohio 1969, "Preface", p.1.

58. H.Melville, *The Confidence Man*, New York 1968, p.278.

59. *MF*, p.413.

60. Cf. C.Griffith, "'Emersonianism' and 'Poeism': Some Versions of the Romantic Sensibility", *Modern Language Quarterly* (June 1961), vol.22, 133. This point is explicitly made by Hawthorne in the first pages of Chapter I, when he says that into his narrative "are woven some airy and unsubstantial stuff of human existence" (p.28). This interpenetration of imagined world and actual world is the essence of romance as Hawthorne conceived it.

61. To George and Tom Keats, 27 Dec. 1817, in *Letters*, p.43.

62. *MF*, p.406.

63. *Ibidem*, p.412.

64. Quoted in J.Lundblad, *Hawthorne and the Tradition of Gothic Romance*, Upsala

- 1946, p.73.
65. *MF*, p.413.
66. *Ibidem*.
67. *Ibidem*, p.344.
68. *Ibidem*, p.342.
69. J.L.Borges, "Nathaniel Hawthorne", in *Other Inquisitions 1937-52*, translated by R.L.C.Simms, New York 1965, p.62.
70. Folsom, p.131.
71. Feldelson, p.69. For a penetrating and lucid analysis of Hawthorne's use of symbols, see Lombardo, *Un rapporto col mondo*, p.144.
72. H.Levin, *The Power of Blackness*, New York 1958, p.91; Porte, p.138.
73. E.A.Poe, "Hawthorne's Tales", in Wilson, ed., *op.cit.*, p.167. For Poe's criticism of Hawthorne, see H.M.Belden, "Poe's Criticism of Hawthorne", *Anglia*, Band 23 (1901), 376-404.
74. Lewis, p.121. See also Josipovici, *The World and the Book*, p.171: "The clue to almost every ambiguity in Hawthorne is to be found not only in an uncertain ethic or aesthetic but in Hawthorne's overriding concern for the psychology of his heroes. Once this is grasped all apparent inconsistencies, as well as the apparent arbitrariness of many of the plots, can be simply resolved".
75. *MF*, p.370.
76. E.Cifelli, "Hawthorne and the Italian", *Studi Americani* 14 (1968), 96.
77. *MF*, p.370. Italics mine.
78. Cf. *ibidem*, p.373. Italics mine.
79. *Italian Notebooks*, pp.73-74 (Rome, Feb. 7, 1858).
80. *MF*, p.289.
81. *Ibidem*, pp. 314-15.
82. *The Scarlet Letter*, in *Great Short Works of Hawthorne*, p.217.
83. *Ibidem*, p.219.
84. T.S.Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*, London 1972, pp.40-42, 43.

85. *The Scarlet Letter*, p.220.
86. *Ibidem*, p.172.
87. Cf. *Italian Notebooks*, pp.123-24 (Rome, Feb. 1st, 1858).
88. G.P.Voigt, "Hawthorne and the Roman Catholic Church", *NEQ*, XIX (Sept. 1946), 397. Among others, in this connection see also Maffiessen, pp.361-2; Cotfino Jones, 101-2; Cifelli, 88; H.G.Fairbanks, "Hawthorne and the Catholic Church", *Boston Univ. Studies in English I* (1955), 148-65; L.J.Fick, *The Light Beyond, A Study of Hawthorne's Theology*, Westminster, Md, 1955, *passim*; S. Rosati, *L'ombra dei padri. Studi sulla letteratura americana*, Roma 1958, pp.23-34.
89. Cf. D.Abel, "A Masque of Love and Death", *Univ. of Toronto Quarterly*, vol.XXIII, no.1 (Oct. 1953), 9.
90. Cf. Folsom, p.134. As Waggoner rightly states in concluding his discussion of Hawthorne's belief, "... Hawthorne's religious belief was existentially oriented, not institutional or traditional. ... Hawthorne was not without his commitments, and in some areas of thought he was willing to declare them. ... But on matters closest to his heart he was either unable to attain commitment or reluctant to declare his commitments propositionally" (p.364).
91. Cf. James, "Hawthorne", p.554: "The character of Hilda has always struck me as an admirable invention - one of those things which mark a man of genius".
92. Fiedler, p.303.
93. Cf., e.g., Waggoner, p.221.
94. Cf. Hawthorne, "Rappaccini's Daughter", in *Great Short Works*, pp.346, 348, 350.
95. *MF*, p.197.
96. Cf. H.T.McCarthy, "Hawthorne's Dialogue with Rome: *The Marble Faun*", *Studi Americani* 14 (1968), 106.
97. Hawthorne, "The Birthmark", in *Great Short Works*, p.302.
98. *MF*, p.388.
99. *Ibidem*, p.389.
100. *Ibidem*, p.383.
101. *Ibidem*, p.242.
102. Abel, 17.

103. *MF*, p.347.
104. *Ibidem*, p.345.
105. *Ibidem*, p.303.
106. *Ibidem*, p.349. Italics mine.
107. *Ibidem*, p.264.
108. Anon., "The Genius of Hawthorne", *Atlantic Monthly*, v.22 (Sept. 1868), 363.
109. Hawthorne, "Lady Eleanor's Mantle", in *Hawthorne's Short Stories*, p.83. Italics mine. See also an important sketch, "Fancy's Show Box", in *Twice-Told Tales*, with an Introduction by R.H.Pearce, London 1967, p.165.
110. *MF*, p.347. Italics mine. Thus, I cannot agree with McCarthy when he affirms: "The principle which Hilda represents ... was one which Hawthorne had always believed valid and central to religious conduct. That a mortal's first duty is to his own salvation he was to shut out all possible access to evil, whether it came from family, friends, or others" (*op.cit.*, 107). The critic adds that "Furthermore, Hawthorne intends to suggest that the principle Hilda represents, unswerving virtue in pursuit of salvation, is the one which serves the ideal of womanhood" (*ibidem*).
111. Cf. C.Griffith, "Cave and Cave Dwellers: The Study of a Romantic Image", *JEGP*, LXII (July 1963), 565.
112. Cf. "The Birthmark", p.302.
113. Waggoner, p.222.
114. Cf. *MF*, pp.346-47.
115. "Rappaccini's Daughter", p.331.
116. *MF*, p.242.
117. Griffith, "Cave and Cave Dwellers", 565.
118. Cf. Bewley, *op.cit.*, especially p.45. For Hawthorne and the "international theme", see also C.Wegelin, "The Rise of the International Novel", *PMLA*, LXXVII (June 1962), 305-10.
119. *MF*, p.411.
120. *Ibidem*, p.410.
121. *Ibidem*, p.411.

122. *Ibidem*, p.318; Crews, p.236.
123. This is the title of a story by Hawthorne in *A Wonder Book*.
124. Cf. Waggoner, p.223.
125. The quotation is from Waggoner, p.222. A further confirmation of my interpretation may be found in "The Prophetic Pictures", where Hawthorne makes a first allusion to the Virgin, the symbol of divine, undefiled womanhood with whose cult Hilda is associated early in the romance (cf. Ch. VI, "The Virgin's Shrine"). While waiting for the painter in his studio, the two protagonists of the story see an old picture, a Madonna "who had perhaps been worshipped in Rome", and feel greatly attracted by her mild and holy look. Walter remarks how enduring her beauty is, adding: "Oh! if all beauty would endure so well! Do you not envy her, Elinor?". Her reply is: "If heaven were earth, I might. But where all things fade, how miserable to be the one that could not fade!" (*op.cit.*, p.63). Eternal innocence, like eternal beauty, is suitable for heaven but not for earth.
126. Cf. Lewis, p.154, who adds: "In the mythology which he inherited, as an American artist, James detected paradoxes and tensions only hinted at by his American master, Hawthorne, and virtually unsuspected even by the most sceptical of Hawthorne's contemporaries". We might add that most critics still show the same "unsuspecting" attitude towards Hilda.
127. *MF*, p.395.
128. "The Custom-House", p.33.
129. *Ibidem*.
130. *Ibidem*, pp.4, 5. A. Trollope described Hawthorne as "a man singularly reticent" ("The Genius of Hawthorne", *North American Review*, Sept. 1879, p. 205), as did many others who knew him. Trilling perceptively remarks: "Hawthorne's impulse to privacy is definitive of his genius" (*op.cit.*, p.169).
131. S.Johnson, *Rasselas*, in *Poetry and Prose*, Selected by M.Wilson, Cambridge, Mass. 1967, p.482.
132. Cf. G. Micks La Regina, "'Rappaccini's Daughter': The Gothic as a Catalyst for Hawthorne's Imagination", *Studi Americani* 17 (1971), 29-30, 69-70.
133. H.Bergson, *Les Deux Sources de la Morale et de la Religion* (1932), in *Œuvres*, Paris 1963, pp.1024, 1018.
134. *Ibidem*, p.1018.
135. *MF*, ed Krieger, N. York, 1961, p. 13.
136. Cf. H.James, *Italian Hours*, N. York, n.d., p. 362

137. Cf. G. Clarke, "To Transform and Transfigure: The Aesthetic Play of Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*", in R. Lee, ed., *N. Hawthorne. New Critical Essays*, London 1982, p. 139.

138. "T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), *The Sacred Wood*, London 1972, p. 49.

139. Cf. Kasson, p. 5.

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